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Hailey Bieber interviewed by Justin

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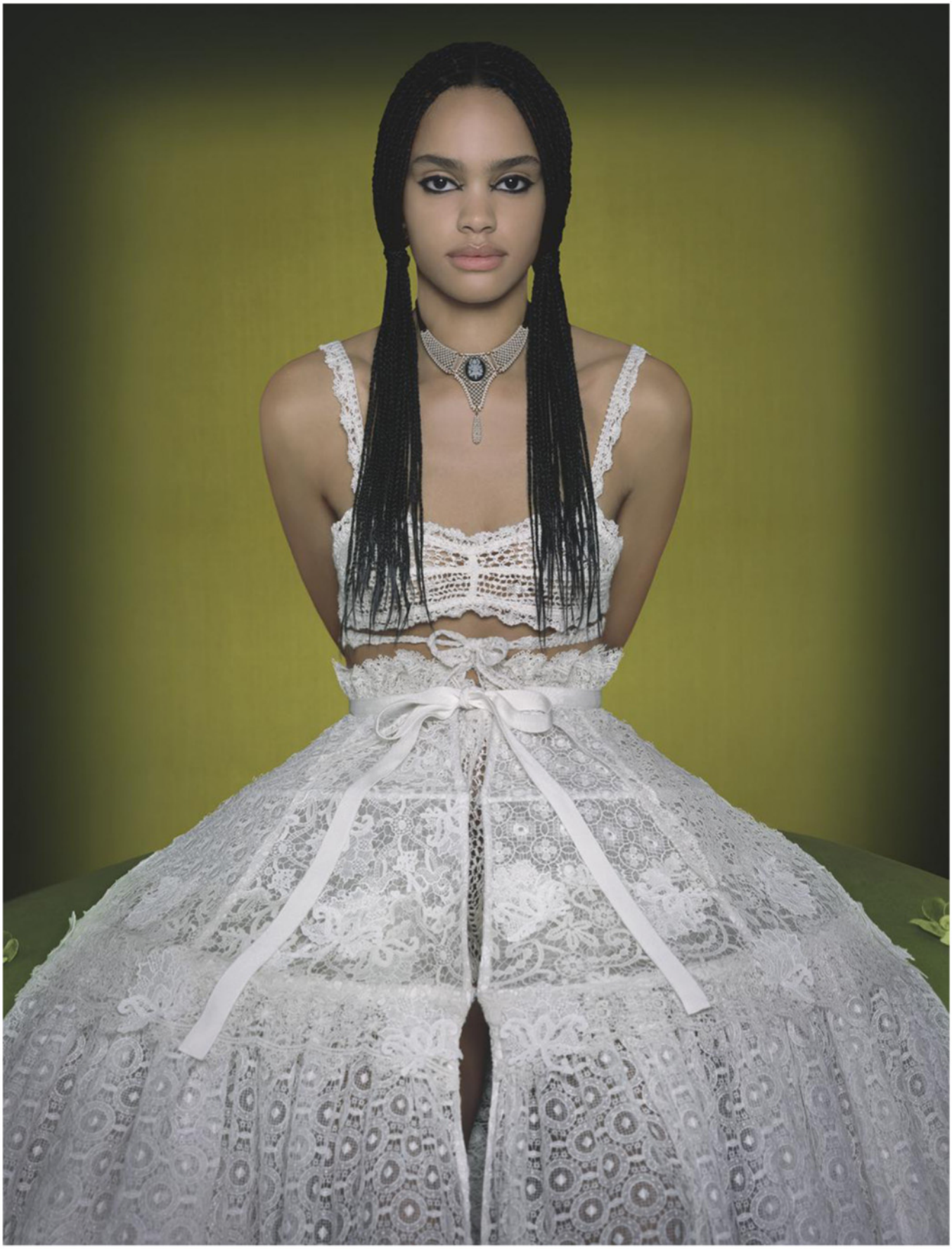

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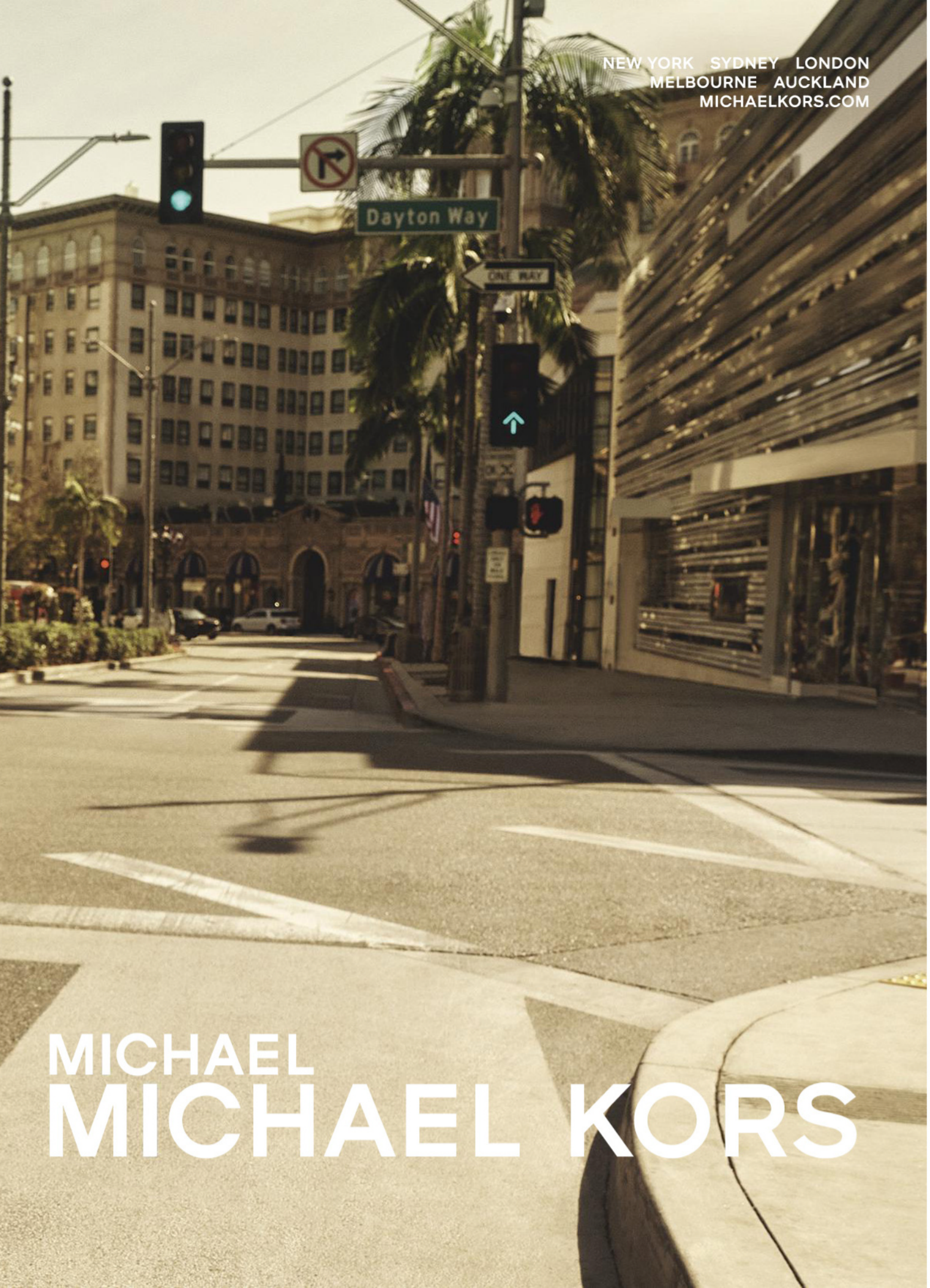

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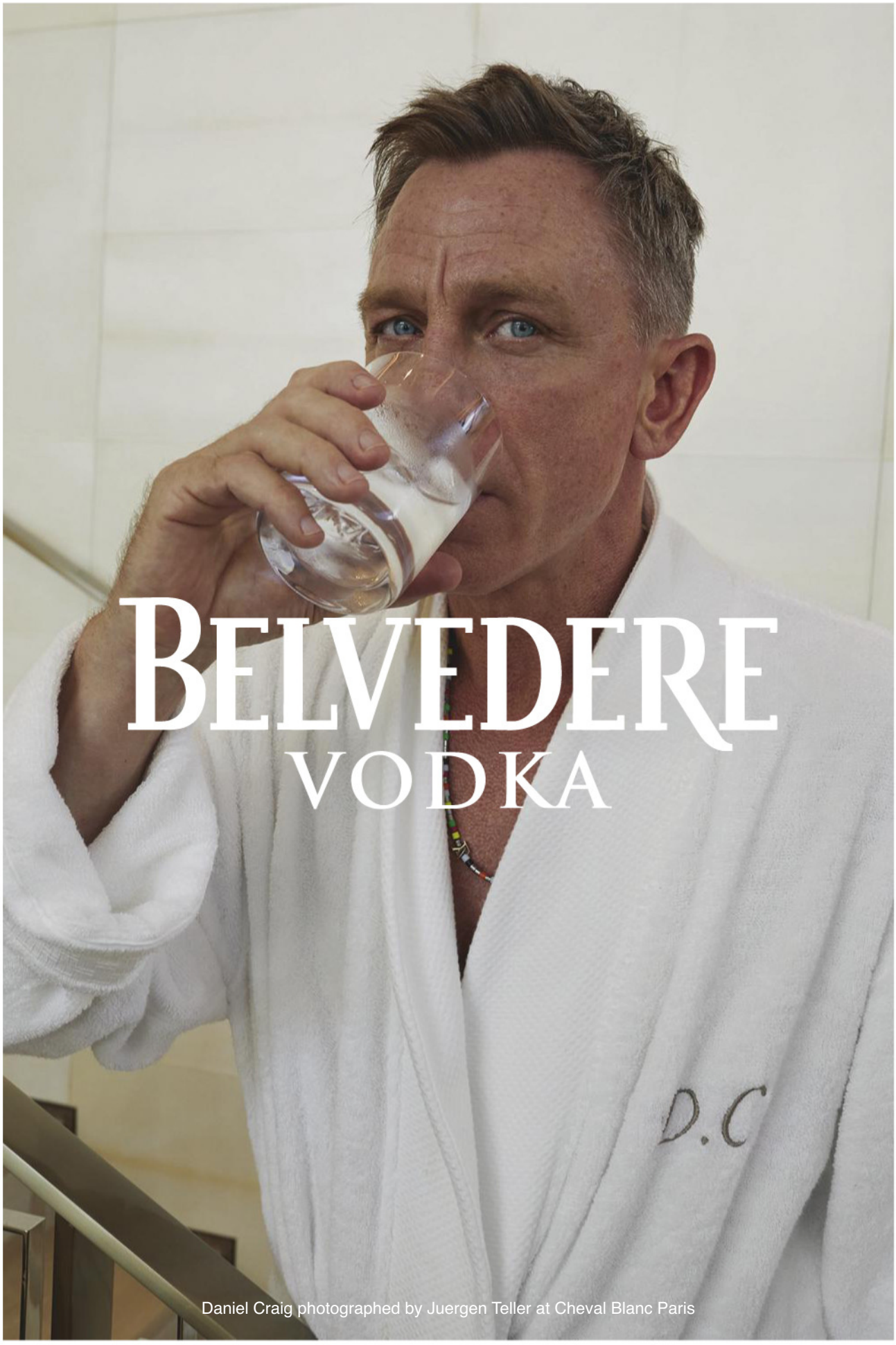

Daniel Craig photographed by Juergen Teller at Cheval Blanc Paris

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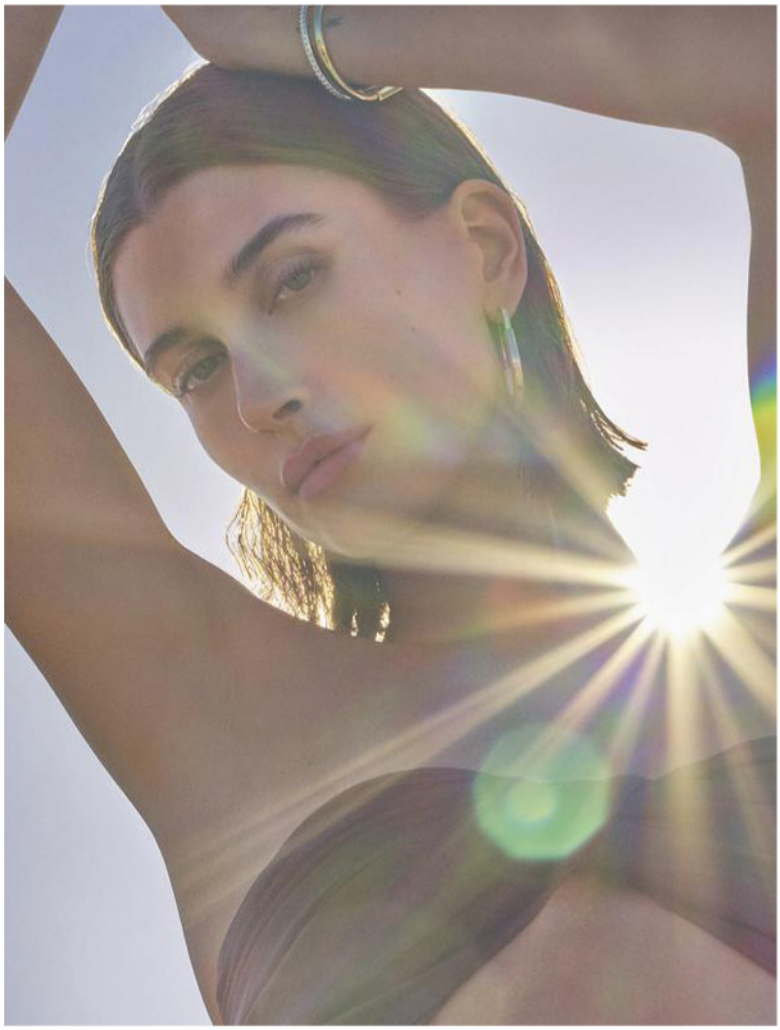

On the cover

Hailey Bieber wears a SAINT LAURENT dress. TIFFANY & CO. earrings and bangles.

Stylist: Christine Centenera
Photographer: Dan Jackson
Hair: Teddy Charles
Make-up: Romy Soleimani
Production: Rosco Production

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March 2023

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Editor's letter

DARREN McDONALD

Welcome to my first issue as editor-in-chief of *Vogue* Australia. I'm so proud to have this role and plan to fill these pages with people, fashion, places and everything else that resonates right now.

Since I started working in magazines, the focus has always been about creating memorable images and collaborating with great designers and photographers. That's certainly been the case at *Vogue* Australia, with a team expertly guided for the past decade by my predecessor, Edwina McCann. Edwina laid down the blueprint of *Vogue* values, and we'll continue to uphold them.

Vogue is the enduring byword for fashion – what's exciting, what's coming next and what you need to know about – and it's these elements I really want to push. Onwards. Forwards. As you can imagine, my first issue at the helm comes with a lot of expectation, so I have filled it with friendly faces. Hailey Bieber and I have known each other for some time now and collaborate on various projects. She is a great woman; warm, funny, driven, and she loves to share and inspire people too, whether through her booming skincare business Rhode or her YouTube channel. Yes, she can cook. Despite her famous husband (who interviews Hailey for us on page 121), she is clear-sighted and has managed to forge her own successful career. The idea to shoot her surrounded by light for our cover was inspired by my light healer, Kat. She has been instrumental in my life, guiding me through so much, and I wanted to share her input here (see page 222.)

Haider Ackermann is someone I've come to know well over the years and one of the most gracious designers in the industry (see page 160). His one-off haute couture collection shown in January for Jean Paul Gaultier was a standout, and reminded us all what a great designer he is. Haider's work is exceptional; I love the sharp tailoring and sense of old-world couture with strict swagger that he explores.

To coincide with this issue, trainer to the stars Kirsty Godso will be debuting *Vogue* Body with us exclusively on vogue.com.au. *Vogue* Body will become a series of 30-minute, high-intensity workouts available online. I admire Kirsty's philosophy and approach to fitness, which really taps into movement as a path to the mental and physical strength vital for us all (see page 184.)

Throughout these pages we explore many new ideas, and our *Vogue* Vanguard story champions the talented people on our radar in fashion, art, beauty and other cultural touchpoints. Look out for a portfolio of new trailblazers in future issues, too.

Finally, led by our brilliant creative director Mandy Alex and her team, we have also tweaked the design. It's a new beginning after all.

Stay tuned and enjoy the fashion.

CHRISTINE CENTENERA Editor-in-chief

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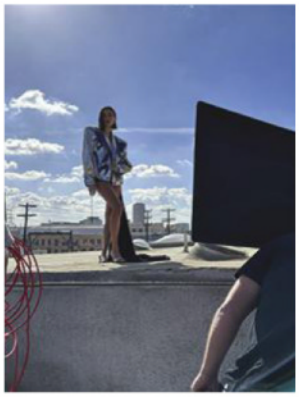
Contributors

For our cover shoot this month, the creative vision was simple: sun-drenched imagery and an abundance of light. Here's how the team brought it all to life.

DAN JACKSON

It was incoming editor-in-chief Christine Centenera's idea to shoot her first cover in full daylight, eclipsing star Hailey Bieber in radiance. It was a new style of shooting for photographer Dan Jackson – "which was exciting" he says and "beautiful" – but the concept came with its own set of challenges. "I was mostly being blinded by the sun," Jackson admits, of the need to shoot directly into the skyline in order to capture the beams and flares. "Fortunately, HB was very patient and professional." The result, from page 121, is all brilliance, and speaks to a fresh era for *Vogue* Australia. "We wanted something that felt like ushering in a new moment," Jackson notes. "An evolution for us and something just bigger than we had done [before]."



MATTHEW EARL

"I shot a lot on the roof," says videographer Matthew Earl of the footage he captured of Hailey Bieber for *Vogue* Australia's digital channels. "A nice amount of natural light was being bounced around, and it really emphasised some of the reflective materials of the pieces worn. That was important to capture, as well as the blocking of Hailey from lower-angle positions, creating beautiful blue-sky backdrops and powerful moments." The light informed his decision to use both digital and camcorder tape to record footage. "I loved mixing these two mediums with techniques like slowing the shutter and frame rate to add diverse visuals for each look."

ROMY SOLEMANI

For the cover shoot, make-up artist Romy Solemani aimed to accentuate Hailey Bieber's trademark glow. "I always like the skin to look glowy. It's definitely my signature and one that we are aligned on," she says, referencing Bieber's famous light-reflecting looks. "I wanted Hailey's skin to be the highlight," she adds. "I made sure to add extra shine in areas that would catch the light, I added a bit of shade to her eyes and made the skin look wet." Solemani reveals that she pushed it as far as she could with the shine to achieve the "glassy and dewy" end result.

HARRIET CRAWFORD

Vogue Australia's junior fashion and market editor, Harriet Crawford, reveals that there was a big focus on shine for the look and feel of our cover shoot. "It laid the foundation for the solar flare moments seen in the outside shots of Hailey," she explains. With photographer Dan Jackson working with the sun in his captures, Christine Centenera, who styled the shoot, was drawn to crystals and embellished clothing. "Dan's acute understanding of lighting allows him to capture the essence of what it is to be a woman," says Crawford. "He uses shadows to highlight all the features that make up the female form. It's strong and sexy, and for that reason, so too are the clothes we chose for Hailey."

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Cutting edge

Hailey's Bieber's hair transformation created headlines – and it all happened in the name of shooting her second-ever cover for *Vogue* Australia.

PHOTOGRAPHS DAN JACKSON

Being an A-list fashion plate, with a style emulated and scrutinised the world over, turns a routine haircut into a careful decision. But in the spirit of creating the beatific imagery for the inaugural *Vogue* Australia cover under Christine Centenera's new editorship, Hailey Bieber was game, going from long and sleek to clipped bob. It helped that she'd conferred closely with those who brought the shoot to life and whose vision she trusts, including editor Centenera, who she has known personally for years. In hairstylist Teddy Charles's hands, she was at ease.

"Hailey is always ready to take a risk for the right project and team. She does like to push the limit – I love her for that," shares Charles, who has worked with the model and skincare founder on numerous occasions.

"It definitely impacted Hailey's confidence on set," he adds of the headline-making bob, which the 26-year-old officially debuted on Instagram in late January, shortly after the shoot.

"Hailey has a background in ballet. She models beautifully; she doesn't need that haircut to do so, but the new look was amazing." Of his vision for the chin-grazing style, Charles reveals, "We wanted to achieve an iconic, super-graphic look but still maintain a sense of freedom and [create] a sexy, sensual and playful moment. We did a wet-haired, textured middle part for the cover story. The look is very powerful on her … "

WORDS: ANGELICA XIDIAS

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Vivienne Westwood's Vive la Cocotte collection for her Gold Label autumn/winter '95/'96 collection, drew on 17th- and 18th-century French culture and arts, a challenge to the reigning 90s minimalism.

Models kiss during a Vivienne Westwood show in 1990.

Vivienne Westwood 1941-2022.

Anarchy in the UK

With the passing of the pioneering British designer, Alison Veness salutes her mutinous spirit, blazing talent and life lived large.

In London, 1977, when Seditionaries – the store Westwood ran with Sex Pistols manager Malcolm McLaren – was outfitting punk legends. The boutique would undergo many iterations and name changes over the years.

Westwood with Azzedine Alaïa and Kylie Minogue in 1992.

Westwood with her husband Andreas Kronthaler and Lily Cole at the Met's 2013 Costume Institute exhibition, *PUNK: Chaos to Couture* in New York.

Vivienne Westwood
autumn/winter '87/'88.

Kate Moss for Vivienne
Westwood spring/summer '95.

In her London studio, circa 1982.

GETTY IMAGES

Vivienne Westwood World's End Fashion
show Pirates, autumn/winter '81/'82.

Naomi Campbell modelling for Vivienne Westwood's
On Liberty autumn/winter '94/'95 collection
featuring bustles and heritage fabrics like tartan.

The joy of Westwood is in the drape, the wicked corset, the curvy cardigan and the Tiny Orb so potent it holds the flame. The DNA: the rip, the riot, the royal. That Mini-Crini … we wore it all. We walked tall. She punked us and we loved her for it. We were going nowhere fast, *Never Mind the Bollocks*, "God Save the Queen". God help us all as we slashed our tights and stuck safety pins through our ears. It was dark fun. It was hard, it was fast, it was life-changing. We touched the edge of freedom and it felt good to be bad. Reckless, feckless, run fast through the streets, shout, laugh, get drunk, just be a punk, for a minute. Then we grew up, pause just a minute … did we? And it all got regal, serious, we wore those twisted gowns, the fake ermine-trimmed crowns. Red lipstick, played it loud. Mouthy. Amber buttons. Sharp tailoring. Pure Red Label gold script. A blazer cut with a razor. A shirt, a stock tie and an off-kilter kilt. Carry a handbag, ride a bike with high heels. Laugh, cry. Just fucking try. Believe in something. Speak your mind. Be brave be bold. Never be anonymous. Tintwistle in the wind. Look it up. Why be plain, be frilly. What the Watteau. Pirates one and all. Speak up. Speak. Make a difference. Vivienne Westwood, one of the most important designers of the 20th and 21st centuries. That's the truth.

It starts with yes

Great things in life come from having the commitment and optimism to say yes

Urwah Nawaz
Winner of the 2022 Vogue Codes Future Innovators presented by Optus.
Read more about Urwah's story at **vogue.com.au/future-innovators**

YAS813L

yes
OPTUS
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Mood shift

Spring/summer ’23 was all about attitudes, with designers understanding that in a complex world, the only grounding force can be emotion, so dress for your state of mind. Choose the mood, suit the moment.

WORDS ALICE BIRRELL
COLLAGES REVOLVING STYLE

In two minds. That was how fashion felt in the wake of the spring/summer ’23 season. Designers, working against a background of looming economic challenges and veritable existential threats, led with level heads, events of recent years rendering them veterans of uncertainty.

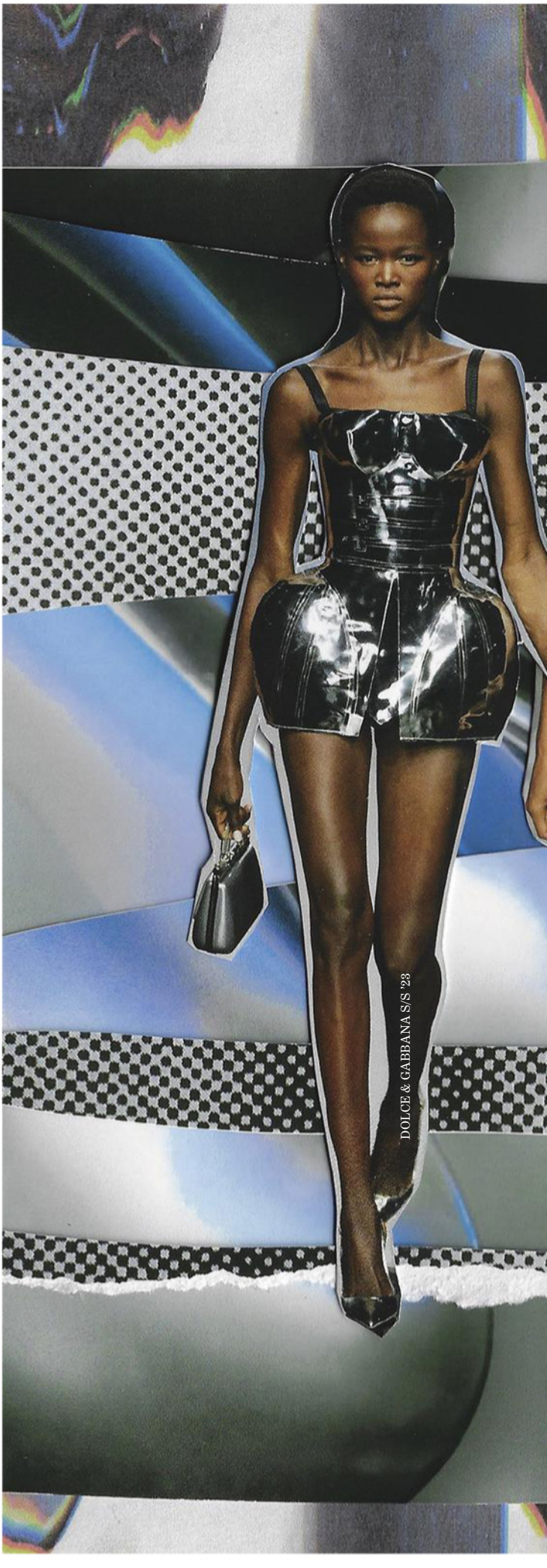
The clothes that resonated most recognised that feelings, not overt trends, are governing our wardrobes – how could they not as we respond to war, ecosystems teetering and extreme beliefs making mainstream incursions?

No wonder then: one of the prevailing moods was escapist abandon. A coping mechanism, and a source of joy came via supremely elegant silhouettes, draping so exquisite it elicited emotion, glittering glamour and glory in beauty. “When having reached their highest level, emotions find ease”, read Pierpaolo Piccoli’s show notes at Valentino. Pushed to the limit, we seek solace in abandon.

But life goes on, a fact Raf Simons and Miuccia Prada catered for, landing on “acts of reality” as a guiding phrase at Prada. When getting by in a busy, and increasingly costly, everyday life is enough of a preoccupation, designers hewed to the idea that clothes should seamlessly fit in with our lives, not vice versa. So came new ideas around wardrobing, elevated separates, sober suiting and humble quality from quiet achievers The Row, Peter Do and Bottega Veneta. “Anti-ostentation,” Mrs Prada at Miu Miu deemed it.

Others went further, confronting sobering realities with darker outputs, literally, in moodier palettes of midnight and obsidian, or got on the front foot and proposed dressing with powerful resolve that translated as modern body armour. Or if that’s too serious, try tackling the absurdities and contradictions of contemporary life in surreal, madcap creations and motifs, in clothes that reflect the fragmented nature of a fractious world.

Moods change, designers agreed, and the variety of approaches on show were a great reminder that dressing is not a grand tactical manoeuvre, but an echo of our mindset in the moment, each as valid as the next; who do we want to be, how do we want to present on the day? Let the head be the compass. Repeat after us, today I am feeling …


DOLCE & GABBANA S/S ’23

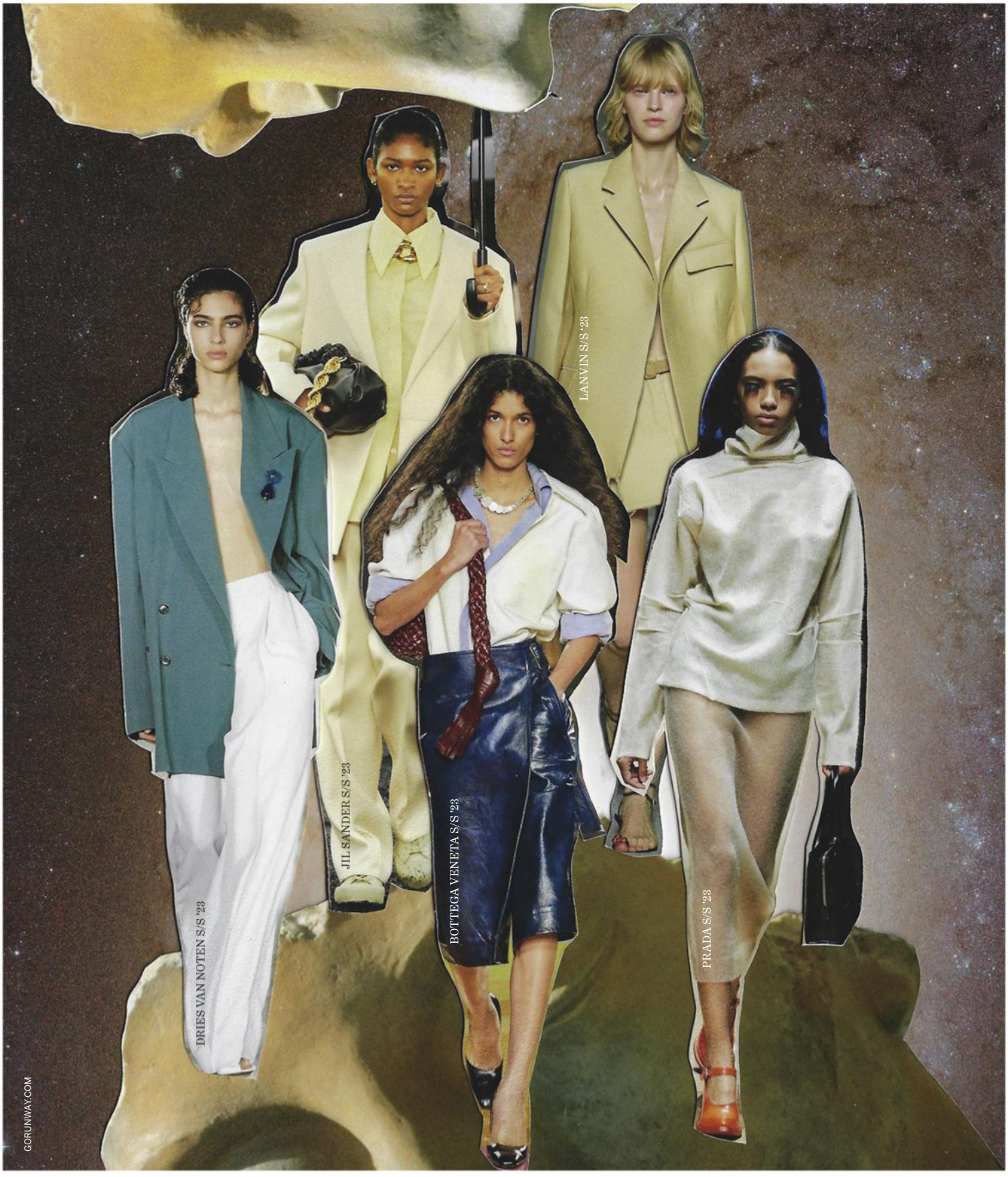
Untouchable

Fighting fit, or just feeling compelled to put a protective foil between you and a world that is encroaching once again on women's rights? Dress to match a mental fortitude from quasi sci-fi moulded metallic body plates to more literal articulated body armour for Joan of Arc purists. The feel is empowered, not embattled. Plate up.

GORUNWAY.COM

Out of body

When modern absurdities don't add up, a discombobulated state of dress does. *Soignée* surreal? Jonathan Anderson (of course) dreamt it up at Loewe and his namesake, exploring blurring boundaries between real and online with the former's artificial anthuriums a 2023 emblem. Cartoonish zippers, towering toppers and distended dresses have a harmonious logic of their own when chaos reigns.



Comfortable in my skin

Women who don't need clothes to speak for them – but with them – should start with the elevated every day as presented everywhere from Jil Sander to Bottega Veneta, and Dries Van Noten's roomily cut suits. Honest fabrics cut into reliable staples with refreshed shapes allow for intimacy with our clothes when they more closely trace the lines of our lives.

Déjà vu

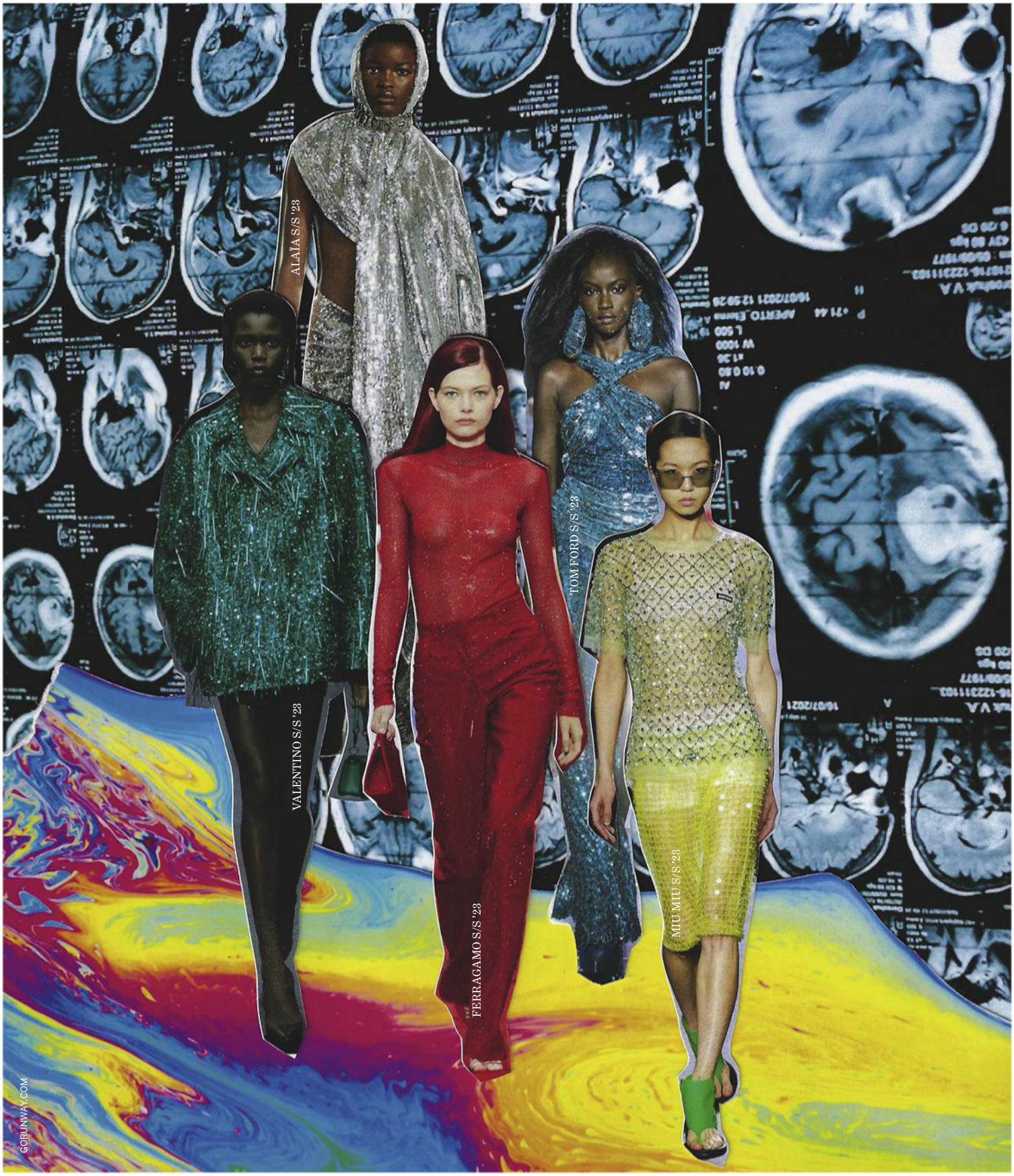
Panniers, hooped crinolines and corsets were reclaimed as a new experimental approach to nostalgia took hold. A romanticism, paired with an off-beat desire to subvert old-world drama that previously was about restriction, sometimes brutally so, is now about unfettered self-expression.

Self-assured

Looking good that doesn't ask for permission: that was the feeling as designers like Anthony Vaccarello at Saint Laurent flexed their technical muscle in drapes that emanated elegance. Floor-skimming gowns that worked with the body weren't trying to win approval, only exalt the wearer. This wasn't languid aristocratic haughtiness but undiluted glamour's coming-of-age.

Subversive

Realists this season stared down realities they found impossible to turn away from. Facing invasion, climate destruction and rocky economics reminds us to live with urgency, and challenge the power structures enabling it all. Enter rebel goth 2.0 via Burberry's ethereal raven summer dresses, Gucci's jet-clad sombre twins and Yohji Yamamoto's shredded hems.



Glittering abandon

Blow-out nights reigned as an antidote after lockdowns, so keep the feeling going, designers seemed to say, swathed in shimmering sequins, dripping in crystals or glinting in an end-of-the-world ankle-grazing gown. Hedonism that heals.

Enter, new

A season change ushers in exciting possibilities for a wardrobe refresh, and this time they were myriad – from real-world pragmatism, to dressing for the joy of it. Invest in next.

STYLING HARRIET CRAWFORD PHOTOGRAPHS RAHEL WEISS

Sheer force

Embrace the elegant reveal of filmy sheers and featherweight fabric, which give breezy understatement a sultry twist.

EMPORIO ARMANI dress, $1,100. GUCCI bra and briefs set, $1,405. CARTIER earrings, $36,500, and ring, $19,500. ST. AGNI bag, $139. GIVENCHY boots, $3,950.

WORDS: JONAH WATERHOUSE. HAIR: RORY RICE. MAKE-UP: ANNE TIMPER
ALL PRICES APPROXIMATE. DETAILS AT VOGUE.COM.AU/WTB

CAMILLA AND MARC top, $380, and skirt, $450. RICK OWENS sunglasses, $950, from One Point Seven Four. GIVENCHY necklace, P.O.A., and bag, $9,600. GUCCI shoes, P.O.A.

Floor work

Take the minimalist's approach to modern femininity: a long-line skirt that skims toes gives the illusion of height, plus wardrobe mileage when the weather shifts.

Scan the QR code to shop *Vogue*'s edit of the best of the trend.

Let's ride

Biker jackets expand their rebel associations with streamlined cuts for round-the-clock relevance.

PRADA jacket, $10,500, and shorts, $5,000. GENTLE MONSTER sunglasses, $450. BULGARI necklace, $103,000. WOLFORD tights, $60. AJE shoes, $325.

RAHEL WEISS
ALL PRICES APPROXIMATE DETAILS AT VOGUE.COM.AU/WTB

GUCCI dress, P.O.A., choker, $1,490, bag, $3,595, and shoes, P.O.A. REBECCA VALLANCE dress, worn underneath, $729. TIFFANY & CO. rings, on right hand, $3,350, and $3,500, and on left hand, $11,500.

FENDI top, $2,250, and pants, $3,390. G.O.D sunglasses, $475. ST. AGNI bag, $279. BULGARI rings, on right hand, $5,050, and on left hand, $7,400, $5,100, and $12,600. AJE shoes, $295.

RAHEL WEISS
ALL PRICES APPROXIMATE DETAILS AT VOGUE.COM.AU/WTB

Living large

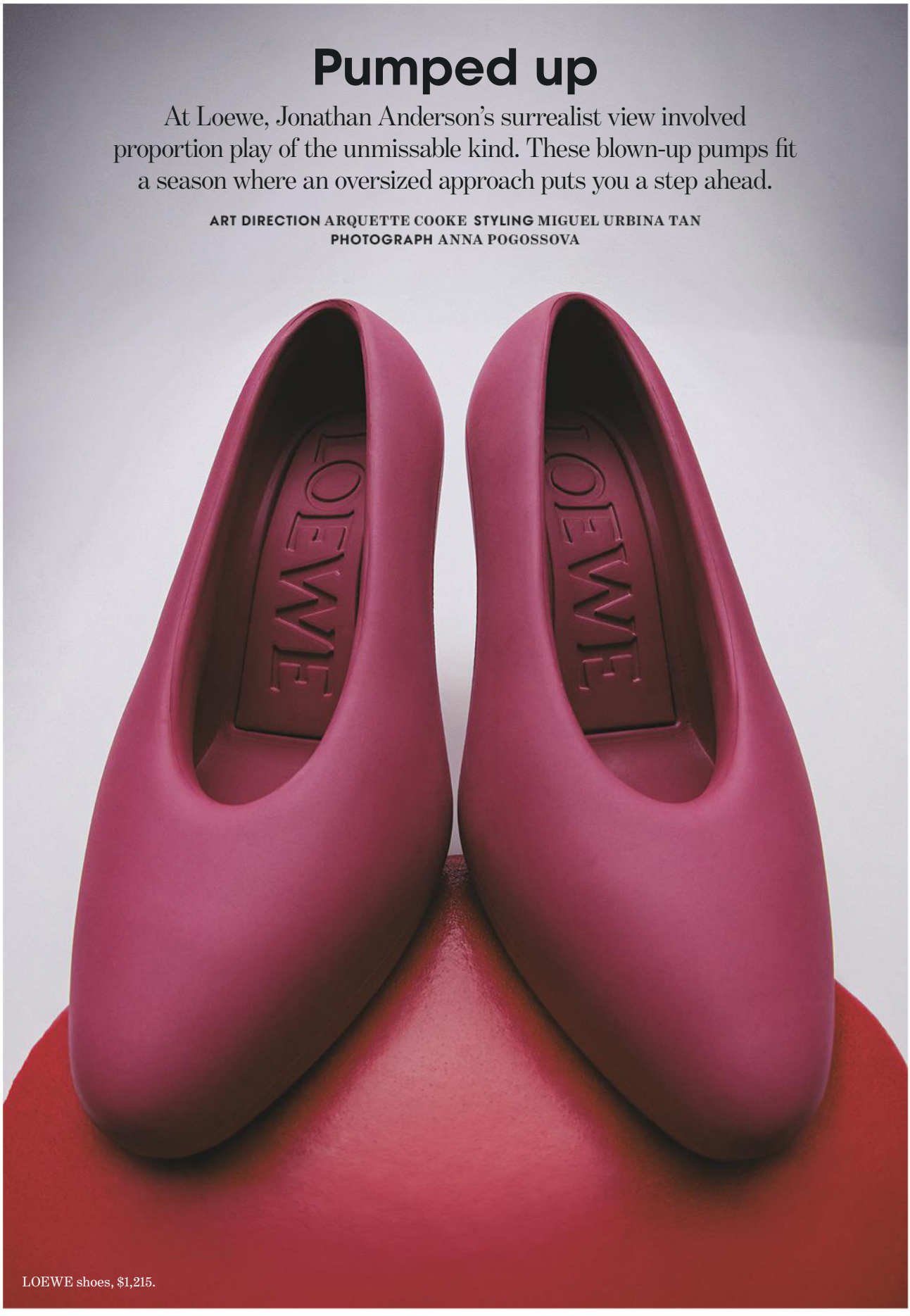
With the pendulum swinging away from micro-sized totes, the season's standout bags took on grandiose proportions that are all-doing, all-carrying.

LOUIS VUITTON shirt, $3,550, shorts, $3,350, and bag, $7,850. CARTIER watch, $46,300.

Pumped up

At Loewe, Jonathan Anderson's surrealist view involved proportion play of the unmissable kind. These blown-up pumps fit a season where an oversized approach puts you a step ahead.

ART DIRECTION ARQUETTE COOKE **STYLING** MIGUEL URBINA TAN
PHOTOGRAPH ANNA POGOSSOVA



LOEWE shoes, $1,215.

WORDS: JONAH WATERHOUSE
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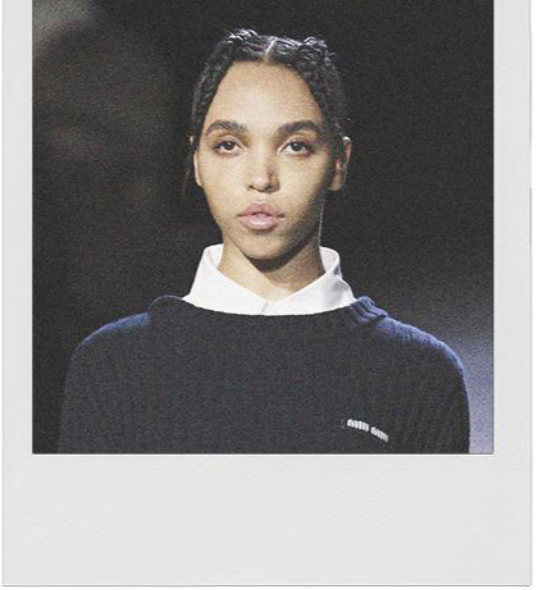
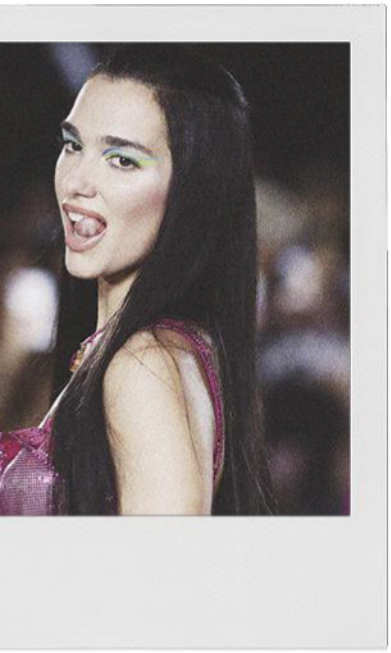
Hoyeon Jung walks Louis Vuitton spring/summer ’23.



FKA Twigs closes Miu Miu’s spring/summer ’23 show.

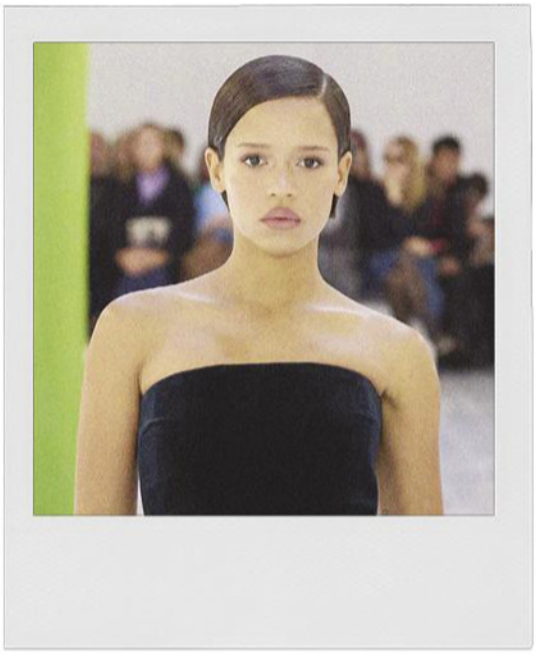
Star turns

As brands make plays for our attention, recent runway shows transformed into bigger and bolder celebrity-fuelled spectacles, but for what purpose? Jonah Waterhouse investigates.



Dua Lipa in Versace’s spring/summer ’22 show.

Hunter Schafer at Prada autumn/winter ’22/’23.



Taylor Russell for Loewe spring/summer ’23.

Anyone who follows fashion, and many who don’t, are familiar with the spectacle on Coperni’s spring/summer ’23 runway. Supermodel Bella Hadid walked onto a platform, where scientist Dr Manel Torres and team sprayed a dress onto her nude torso with the aerosol material Fabrican. It clocked 10 million views on YouTube, narrowly skirted TikTok’s nudity rules, and made Coperni one of the season’s most talked-about brands.

A model by trade, Hadid’s celebrity status is undeniable; in 2022, fashion search engine Tagwalk revealed shows featuring Hadid garnered 825 per cent more clicks than those that didn’t. Put simply, it was a match made in online engagement heaven. And it wasn’t the only appearance of its type this season.

Bones and All actor Taylor Russell opened Loewe’s floral dreamscape

GETTY IMAGES GORUNWAY.COM

collection, performer FKA Twigs modelled Miu Miu's final look, Paris Hilton took to the runway in bejewelled pink for Versace, and South Korean model-turned-actor Hoyeon Jung made her fashion return at Louis Vuitton.

Celebrity cameos have been increasing for seasons: Nicole Kidman, Dua Lipa – who previously walked Versace – and Kim Kardashian whipped up an online frenzy with their runway appearances at Balenciaga couture autumn/winter '22/'23, while *Euphoria* actor Hunter Schafer closed Prada in 2022. As star muses move from front row to *the* show in unprecedented numbers, some are wondering if we're seeing the next seismic shift in the entertainment-meets-fashion crossover, where a celebrity-obsessed culture begins to change fashion's direction and purpose.

For as long as celebrity has existed though, so too has the exchange of influence, from brand to celebrity and vice versa. In the 1920s, Josephine Baker was very often clad in the designs of Vionnet and Paul Poiret, a precursor to brand ambassadorships of today. In the 1970s, Catherine Deneuve's association with Yves Saint Laurent came to shape fashion history, while Azzedine Alaïa selected Grace Jones to model his statuesque designs a decade later. Then, from the late 1980s, Anna Wintour replaced models with singers and actors on the cover of American *Vogue*.

"When celebrities are 'forgotten' about, are about to go on a world tour or need to reposition themselves, going to [fashion week] gives them exposure and credibility," says Alexandra Van Houtte, Tagwalk founder and CEO. "Celine Dion did it a few seasons ago, Kylie Jenner this season; there's always one that gets the photographers and hype going, which puts them back on the radar for brand collaborations and Instagram content."

But what, as we move beyond mere show attendance to celebrity runway turns and collaborations, is driving the change now? With the growing democratisation of the industry and rejection of the elitism long associated with fashion, some point

Bella Hadid in Coperni's spray-on dress for spring/summer '23.

to the broad base appeal celebrities tap into – not just a niche few. Van Houtte says involving conventionally famous people fosters relatability and adds entertainment value in what's often seen as a lofty industry. In her words, Kim Kardashian on a runway "demonstrates that fashion is also a 'mass-market' industry, and not just tall, skinny models".

Others point to broader social forces that fashion isn't immune from. "In the wider context, we're living in a huge crisis of attention," says Johann Hari, bestselling author of *Stolen Focus: Why You Can't Pay Attention*. "The average office worker focuses on any one task for about 50 seconds, [while] the average teenager focuses on only one task for 19 seconds … imagine you're at a party, and you can only speak to people in 19-second bursts. What would you do? You'd be more outrageous, aggressive, louder."

It's up to fashion to weigh the impacts of our clothes becoming bolder and more shocking. "There are lots of good things you gain when the world speeds up, but what you lose is depth and contemplation," says Hari. If this premise is applied to fashion, the immediate publicity from a starry catwalk might be great, but what kind of attention does it draw? And at what cost?

Some clever names, however, have found ways to balance star power with contemplation. Take Thom Browne's storybook spring/summer '23 show, with actor Gwendoline Christie cast perfectly as a fairytale character owing to her otherworldly qualities, or Linda Evangelista's runway return at Fendi resort 2023, after a fat-freezing treatment left the super with a changed appearance and an initial knock in confidence.

In the past, examples of a healthy balance of fame and fashion abounded. When Tom Ford launched womenswear in 2010, muses Julianne Moore and Beyoncé walked in a buzzy first show that created an immediate appetite for his slick, sensual work. Marc Jacobs and Miuccia Prada have long cast celebrities who align with their modus operandi; Lady Gaga and Miley Cyrus have walked for Jacobs, while Chloë Sevigny as a muse for Miu Miu in the 90s helped →

Serena Williams walked in Off-White's autumn/winter '22/'23 show.

> "What we're seeing now is a shift to imaginative displays that cut through the digital clutter and illicit consumers to experience awe again"

launch her to the stratosphere of cool. A perfect synergy between brand and ambassador can exist, and when done right, is part of fashion's ability to conjure a story, build a world and transport viewers.

Some labels might say such casting is holistic – a way to connect to the zeitgeist, with a viral Instagram video a happy bonus. Piergiorgio Del Moro, one of the world's most influential casting directors, says his work is about reading the times. "Casting evolves as the community evolves," he says. "The fuller inclusivity we see in certain designers and collections really reflects what the community seems to [put forward] … more diversity in terms of race, age and ethnicity. You normally feel what people want to see as a change, and reflect that in casting." In this sense, the intertwining of fame can be read as fashion doing its job: reflecting a world increasingly infatuated with celebrities.

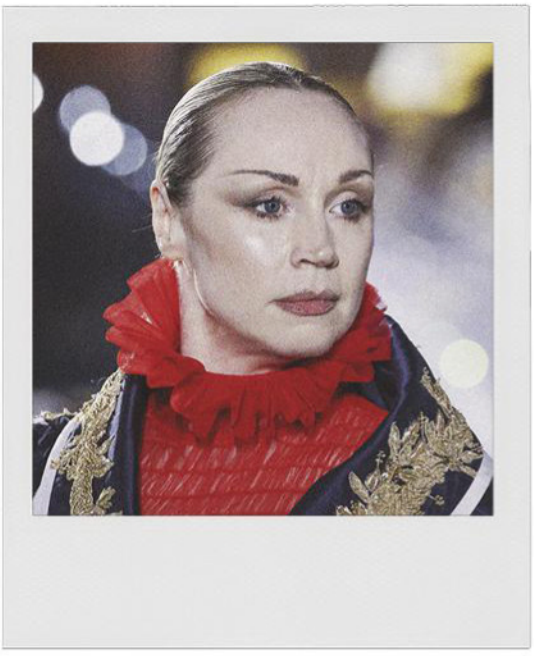
Cassandra Napoli, senior strategist at trend forecaster WGSN, says leveraging celebrity is just one part of the fashion ecosystem – and that there are multiple other new and innovative plays for attention. "What we're seeing now is a shift to imaginative displays that cut through the digital clutter and illicit consumers to experience awe again," she says, citing the metaverse as a way fashion will become increasingly accessible. "Instagram introduced the masses to the glitz and glamour of fashion week through the prism of the influencer's viewpoint, [but] the metaverse could allow the masses to participate in the event themselves from the virtual front row."

And not all buzzed-about labels intend to create spectacles; some are working without the celebrity machine. After the spring/summer '23 collections, *Vogue Runway* revealed the most viewed show was emerging name Nensi Dojaka, the Albanian-British designer and LVMH Prize-winner known for her artisanal party looks. Del Moro helmed Dojaka's casting, which was comprised of professional models, and while Emily Ratajkowski made a brief appearance, it still ranked above the far more starry celebrity constellations at Versace, Balmain and Dolce & Gabbana.

Nicole Kidman made a rare runway appearance for Balenciaga couture autumn/winter '22/'23.

Mike Eckhaus and Zoe Latta, of New York and Los Angeles-based label Eckhaus Latta, blend street casting with a diverse line-up, from actor Hari Nef to friend Paloma Elsesser, for their runway shows, with the intention of fostering authenticity over chasing an online moment. "Our shows can be somewhat spectacular and always have a bit of shock and awe, but we don't start there. That's not the main message," the duo share in a statement. "If our shows end up that way, it's just a product of us trying to express ourselves and our message in a way that feels authentic and whole."

Eckhaus and Latta are exemplars of how fashion will always question prevailing preoccupations. The hope is that an overarching focus on celebrity and surface theatrics is just another dynamic for fashion creatives to question, break down, and then propose divergent ways of thinking. If they don't, we risk fuelling a less, as Hari put it, contemplative system, distracted by attention grabs that take away from fashion's other purposes: good clothes as a means of expression to suit our lives. And while the luminous shine of celebrity isn't losing its allure just yet, it will be the good ideas they help illuminate that stay longest in our memories. ■



Gwendoline Christie at Thom Browne spring/summer '23.

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Vogue Vanguard

The inaugural Vogue Vanguard, the first in an ongoing series, celebrates the game-changers and innovators breaking ground in our most creative fields. Introducing the new guard of homegrown fashion talent.

WORDS ALICE BIRRELL AND JONAH WATERHOUSE

Emily Watson

It was a case of 16,000-kilometres of distance, during a New York winter, that Melbourne-based designer Emily Watson realised her fondness for Australian summers, ultimately deciding the direction of her four-year-old label. "I was homesick," she says of a semester abroad while completing a fashion degree at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT) in 2019.

Tapping swimwear, something that instantly evoked home, she began subverting and reconstructing its codes. "It's funny to the people who know me, as I'm not much of a beachgoer," she says of what now forms her brand's DNA.

That hasn't stopped her splicing and lopping her way to asymmetrical separates, leotards and swim dense with ruffles, ties and panels – some individual pieces have 50-plus pieces – in pool-toy brights.

Right now, orders from international stockists means she's busy meeting demand as she produces mostly in-house with locally sourced fabrics, with fans in Emma Chamberlain, Bella Hadid and stylist Lotta Volkova only fuelling things. They've showcased the in-built versatility of her aquatically influenced work, that toggles between beach and club: a tankini transforms into an off-shoulder top, for example, via ruching. Details, Watson says, she won't compromise on as the label grows. "It's not just about the cut," Watson says, "but the way it moves when you move." *Alice Birrell* →

PHOTOGRAPHS: MIA RANKIN
PORTRAIT: MICHELLE LI

Emily Watson.

Emily Watson
spring/
summer '23.

Agnes Choi.

Looks from Choi's label Pach Project.

Agnes Choi

Sydney designer Agnes Choi, who founded sustainable label Pach Project in 2020, is endlessly fascinated by bodies, her starting point for clothing that leaves room for each wearer's unique personality and physicality.

"**I'm experimenting with what is considered 'standard' as this has long been linked to conventional, binary** beauty standards," she says of ignoring traditional sizing. "We encourage the wearer to take the reins as to how they'd like the garment to fit." It's why Choi makes clothes that inventively eschew traditional sizing charts; one-size skirts, trousers and T-shirts that fit small and larger sizes through concealed elastics and buttons.

Choi hopes her process paves the way for others. "I'm hopeful that the future of our industry will be more open and inviting to a wider community … it will be weirder and nerdier, and we can all look to our own bodies for confidence." *Jonah Waterhouse*

Isabelle Hellyer

"I'm committed to a robust Australian textile industry, where historic techniques are alive," says Isabelle Hellyer, of All Is A Gentle Spring. Setting her sights locally and using time-honoured crafts makes Hellyer unusual as an emerging name – she deploys 20th-century couture practices into her spiral steel-boned and cartridge-pleated clothing.

In her work, English heritage wool brushes up against elastane dance pants, and minis with silk taffeta ball skirts. "I owe an enormous debt to my grandmother who kept a brilliant library of vintage patterns and taught me to sew," reflects Hellyer, who cites 18th-century France and Hollywood classics (*Come September* and *The Pyjama Game*) as influences.

She's not weighed down by the past, though. She's making future heirlooms via quality construction, and is a realist about challenges emerging designers share, such as ways to scale up slow fashion, though she's optimistic. "I think we're in a flexible period of change." *AB*

Looks from All Is A Gentle Spring's classics capsule.

Isabelle Hellyer.

Alix Higgins.

Looks from Alix Higgins resort '23.

Alix Higgins

Internet poetry. If those two things seem at odds, you haven't encountered Alix Higgins's work, blending phrases that convey a tender vulnerability like "to dance again" and "I'm so scared" with glitchy digital prints that evoke early days of the internet, when laser printers and mood-laden Tumblr reigned.

Debuting at Australian Fashion Week in 2022, Higgins exercises skills learnt interning at Marine Serre, such as blending a duality of the digital and emotional that mirrors his childhood: divided between days outdoors at the beach and the river in his backyard, and nights spent online.

His work has found support among his creative community, eschewing competition in the name of creativity – a hallmark of this next generation. "There is a real support and appreciation of one another that wasn't always present in fashion," he says. "This feels promising." *AB* →

PORTRAITS: (CHOI) ANTHONY HINTON, (HELLYER) JOE BRENNAN, (HIGGINS) DANIEL HARDEN OTHER IMAGES CHRISTIAN DEFONTE ROB TENNENT ELLEN VIRGONA

Kritikon Khamsawat

Fashion often helps us inhabit a fantasy world, but some designers find fuel for that magic in the everyday. Enter Melbourne designer and RMIT graduate Kritikon Khamsawat, 25, whose pieces incorporate pedestrian items into wearable art; take the use of an umbrella to imitate the shape of a crinoline skirt, or the boning of a tent forming a dress in another.

"Surrealism plays a big part in my aesthetic sensibility," Khamsawat shares, adding that his goal is to "spark conversation between various design industries, art movements and cultures in a new light."

Khamsawat's vision was formed by necessity. "As a young child migrating from a small village in northern Thailand, I struggled with English. The only way I was able to communicate was through drawing," he says. "I developed a confused sense of self, but watching my mother's interactions with dressing, I was able to understand the transformative power of garments and identity through clothes."

Khamsawat's latest accolade is of untold value. As a winner of the 2022 Australian Fashion Foundation Prize, he is heading to New York for a prestigious major label internship this year to further hone his craft. *JW*

Looks from Kritikon Khamsawat.

Kritikon Khamsawat.

Phoebe Pendergast's Honeymoon Phase collection.

Phoebe Pendergast

"We joke about the fact that my favourite children's book was called *Phoebe the Fashion Fairy*," says 25-year old designer Phoebe Pendergast, who told her friends at age eight she wanted to be a designer.

Now in London studying at Central Saint Martins, the storybook feel flows through her work in Bo Peep florals and patchworked patterns with an updated sportif edge. She's emblematic of a cohort whose rise was shaped by pandemic introspection; her pieces are deeply reflective, translating happiness from small moments – a romance-fuelled stomach-flip, a song – into romantic pieces.

"Other times, I try to redirect a sad or melancholic feeling into my work," she says, proof that the powerful emotions the pandemic stirred up can be transfigured. "Whenever I feel overwhelmed, it can be helpful to reframe the current situation as an opportunity to innovate." Like using second-hand stores as a resource for fabrics, and a sustainable necessity in a fashion system she recognises to be wasteful. "I'll deconstruct them and find new possibilities." *AB*

PORTRAITS: (KHAMSAWAT) MYLES PEDLAR, (PENDERGAST) NATHALIE SCARLETTE. (KOURHANI) KURT JOHNSON. OTHER IMAGES: JIMIN SON

Tarek Kourhani.

Looks from Kourh's collection number 02.

Tarek Kourhani

Some of the best ideas stem from frustration. For Tarek Kourhani, Sydney-based designer and founder of Kourh, starting a new label mid-pandemic after 16 years in the industry was an outlet for lockdown malaise that helped his truest creative instincts materialise. An increasingly large fan base, which shares Kourhani's penchant for nonconformist design, followed suit.

"I started Kourh with the sole purpose of having fun again in a field I was feeling so stuck in," he says of the brand, which borrows from the glamour of Bob Mackie and Studio 54 with a dark and "twisted" edge. Denim sets and bejewelled party dresses are styled with latex hoods and gloves, crafted with an artisanal knowledge that internships at The Row and Erdem helped Kourhani glean. All designs are intentionally genderless, made for a world of dissolving boundaries that emerging designers are increasingly exploring. "Street casual meets tailored glamour," as the designer describes his work, though a love for lustre will always be paramount. "I'm like a magpie. I'm addicted to shiny things." *JW*

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Fluid forms

A dancer's instinct has seen the designs of rising Australian designer Caroline Reznik worn by some of the biggest names in the world. And that's just her opening act. By Alice Birrell.

STYLING MIGUEL URBINA TAN
PHOTOGRAPHS DAPHNE NGUYEN

CAROLINE REZNIK top, $850, bra, $1,100, and pants, $2,200. ALINKA necklace, $45,000. CHANEL necklace, $5,820, and belt, $13,280, from the Chanel boutiques.

Caroline Reznik felt she was destined for the stage. A trained ballet dancer, she never could have predicted how it would come to pass though: in front of tens of thousands at Coachella in 2022.

Don't be surprised if you don't know her name. It was as an emerging designer that she debuted, her work worn by Grammy award-winning rapper and producer Doja Cat on stage. "You have to kind of shoot your shot. And it paid off," says the 29-year-old designer based in New South Wales's Central Coast region.

It began three years earlier during Reznik's graduate year at Sydney's University of Technology, when the name of Doja Cat's creative director, Brett Alan Nelson, appeared in her inbox. "I don't know exactly how they found me," she recalls. "I got this email at one in the morning." Nelson had requested pieces from Reznik's collection for an upcoming video, but she didn't have any samples spare. "So, I just quickly sketched something," she says. "I didn't want to miss out on the opportunity and thought the worst thing they could do was say no."

The answer came at 3am: yes. "They loved it and wanted it." The black knit, crystal creation Doja wore is emblematic of Reznik's stringy, body-baring dresses and skin-tight separates that hints at how she wants anyone wearing her pieces to feel. "Women and men, it doesn't matter," Reznik says. "Revealing the body is a way to empower and not have to hide."

But it's more than just overt sensuality. Her pieces root themselves in a youthful femininity, revealed through painstaking craftsmanship, minute details and complicated construction. Some creations are so barely there, they register as wisps of unravelling lace, or ropes of crystal, encircling the body in concentric strands. Others feel pieced together, →

Caroline Reznik wears a CAROLINE REZNIK dress and briefs, both P.O.A. CHRISTIAN LOUBOUTIN shoes, $3,595.

Rosalía wearing Caroline Reznik.

(MAIN IMAGES) HAIR: DAREN BORTHWICK. MAKE-UP: SHANE PAISH. MODEL: ALIDA (REZNIK PORTRAIT) STYLING: HARRIET CRAWFORD. PHOTOGRAPH: RAHEL WEISS HAIR: RORY RICE. MAKE-UP: ANNE TIMPER

Above left: CAROLINE REZNIK jacket, $2,690, and skirt, P.O.A. MIU MIU briefs, $490. CHANEL necklace, $1,040. CHRISTIAN LOUBOUTIN shoes, $3,595. Tights, stylist's own. **Above right**: CAROLINE REZNIK dress and briefs, both P.O.A. CHANEL necklace, $1,040, and belt, $7,500. SAINT LAURENT shoes, $1,395. Tights, stylist's own.

Above: Kendall Jenner (right) on Instagram wearing Caroline Reznik pants for Coachella 2022, with Hailey Bieber.

Doja Cat in a Caroline Reznik bodysuit performing at Coachella last year.

like an asymmetrical leather jacket with front panels held in place by delicate leather ties, giving off both fragility and toughness.

"There was always this strength in empowerment and divine feminine within the roles I danced in," says Reznik for whom *Swan Lake* always resonated for its tension between light and dark forces. "It was always about the power within the woman."

After leaving school at 13, Reznik danced in London, Cuba and New York, where she studied at the School of American Ballet. Sustaining an injuring, she came home to regain strength, but interest in actual dancing waned. "I started to put more time into creating costumes," she recounts. She watched her mum, a retired ballerina-turned-costume-maker, sewing minute beads onto tutus, and it stayed with her. "It was very intuitive what she did, and I took from her that macro and micro sensibility of how details can translate from the stage to an audience. I have that perspective of how a textile and fabrication can be translated from a sensory level of perception."

Reznik deploys unique methodology to do this, namely Benesh Movement Notation, a kind of visual shorthand that allows choreography to be written down like musical notes, something she learned through dance. "It translates into whole movements of the body and the arms and the way that your body would be positioned to different corners of the stages," she elucidates. "I just translated that musical note into a way that cloth would then travel around the body."

She did this during lockdown. With movement limited, Reznik was drawn to how stage costume historically allowed for a stretch of an arm, a sweep of the leg. She applied that approach to now. How do we need to move? How can fabric create a hypnotic effect as it moves through the world?

"Brett had come back to me and just offered," she says of the invitation to design costumes for Doja Cat and her 23 backup dancers at Coachella. "There was a bit of grey area about whether I could pull it off because of the bandwidth that I'd need to execute 24 looks." An offer came to fly her to LA, and Reznik found herself with a team of tailors at her disposal. "I've never worked so hard in my life. It was the most amazing experience. But when I came back, I was very tired. I actually flew home and arrived the day it went live – it was live on TV and I was zonked out."

Not unlike her reset after a dance injury, Reznik might need to gather energy, given that Rosalia, Cardi B and Kendall Jenner have all now worn her pieces. "I definitely didn't foresee any of this happening in my dreams. It's surpassed everything I thought could have happened," she says. And like that, she'd found a way back to the stage. "It felt really rewarding that it swayed back to the dance world and performance world organically," she reflects.

All eyes on act II. ■

PHOTOGRAPHS: (TOP) DAPHNE NGUYEN. (OTHERS) GETTY IMAGES. INSTAGRAM: KENDALLJENNER
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Fashion writer Kristen Bateman has evolved her style to include form-fitting catsuits, like Jean Paul Gaultier's (right), as designers include more than just sample size in their takes on sexy dressing.

Body language

Figure-hugging, skin-baring dressing returns with a revolutionary twist: women designers are flipping the script, as one writer, who didn't always fit the mould, finds out. By Kristen Bateman.

There's never been a better time to dress for yourself. Gone are the days of piling on skin-tight, form-fitting looks to draw the male gaze – the new mode of sexy dressing celebrates the inner self and represents a shift of female designers catering to a more inclusive size range with an aesthetic that is unapologetically feminine.

Motherhood, rolls of skin and all the parts of our lives that have traditionally been disregarded by fashion and labelled as unappealing or unsexy are now on full display in sartorial celebration. For proof, look to rising designers like Elena Velez, who consistently casts a diverse set of models, and challenges the obligations and multifaceted roles of being a woman through her clothing. Elsewhere, Greek designer Dimitra Petsa of label Di Petsa has created wet-look dresses inspired by the idea of women no longer feeling embarrassed about bodily fluids, and in doing so, celebrates women's natural bodies rather than hiding them, or, at the opposite end of the spectrum, oversexualising them.

Recently, as someone who has lived many lives in oversized, volume-heavy silhouettes or big swingy, swishy skirts from the likes of Simone Rocha and Chopova Lowena, I've been drawn to the mesmerising magic of clothing that fits the new narrative of bodycon, and actually *fits* me as a non-sample size woman, too. While it sounds like something that should be ubiquitous, it's a relatively new concept in the world of high fashion. In recent months, I've traded saccharine puff frocks for printed catsuits and oversized, billowing skirts for mesh dresses. Sure, there are still times when I can't resist the appeal of a dress so big it knocks things over as I walk, but the new vision of female-led brands that offer sizes and aesthetics that put women first is undeniably inspiring and incredibly comforting, on a deeply personal level.

Perhaps the biggest cause behind the movement is that young female designers are tired of making clothing that don't fit themselves, their friends or their mothers. On top of that, in 2023, a woman's point of view on what is sexy feels inherently more modern than something designed by a man.

"I'm always really careful to not do something necessarily sexy," says London-based Karoline Vitto, who positions herself as a designer who celebrates the most controversial and overlooked aspects of the female form, in pieces that →

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"In 2023, the most revolutionary thing is dressing for the female gaze. Fashion is starting to realise that femininity and womanhood are not so one-dimensional"

run up to a size UK 28. In lieu of elastane stretched taut across chiselled abs, she showcases cut-out dresses with metal accents on folds of skin, stretch marks and perfectly flabby arms. It's not only beautiful, it's tasteful, sophisticated and, most of all, it looks great in a multitude of sizes. "I like to use the word sensual, because the final goal of the garments is for women to feel central. It's much more of an internal feeling rather than an external demonstration."

Bodycon has also become a little bit weird, in the best way. Take, for instance Jean Paul Gaultier's reissued cyber dots collection, Schiaparelli's gilded body parts or Loewe's dynamic slip dresses. It's about the female body in a surrealist, artistic way. Likewise, emerging designer Sinead Gorey has gained a following for her *trompe l'oeil* body prints made to fit a range of sizes. "I wanted to develop it so that it was kind of universal, so any girl can wear it," she says. "If I didn't promote that we do sizes from six to 16, a whole chunk of my customer base, my followers, people who follow the brand, they wouldn't relate."

Still, with all this talk about the female body, there's so much more work to be done. I've felt the pang of disappointment many times while sitting at a runway show when a designer opts to include only sample-size models in clothing that is primarily designed to reveal and celebrate women's bodies. I genuinely like some of these collections, but I don't see myself represented in many of them. When Coperni spray-painted Bella Hadid's body with a fabric dress at its spring/summer '23 show, it was a spectacular display of ingenuity, but I was left thinking about how the dress itself relied solely on her toned, ideal body. Without her, or any other woman with a body type that fits the world's view of perfection, the dress represented a massive lack of aesthetic viewpoint. And what about all those collections of micro mini-skirts and barely there bralettes with not a single plus-size model in sight, or labels that produce sheer and delicate nothings with mantras that claim to put women's bodies first but don't produce extended sizing? This is about prioritising skinny bodies over personal style and fashion.

Like everything else, it will take time for fashion to catch up. Body positivity is a relatively new concept. "The term was coined in the 1990s, but the roots of it was in the fat-acceptance movement that began in the 60s and was part of a larger revolution in fashion that included a shift to more gender-neutral clothes," explains fashion historian Einav Rabinovitch-Fox. "With the rise of feminism in this period, people began to question the oppressive nature of the fashion and beauty industries." Once the 90s and early 2000s hit and social media exploded, there was even more of a backlash against the "heroin chic" aesthetic and the beauty ideals driven by mass media and consumer culture. "Sizes of clothing, which were never really standardised for women, have changed drastically. Sizes for women used to be from 8 to 38, where the average size was 16. Modelling agencies used to hire models sizes 12 to 16. Sizes 0 to 6 didn't exist; this is really a new invention of the 90s."

The perception of sizing and body acceptance has changed drastically, too. "During the 19th century, the ideal figure was curvy and full," says Rabinovitch-Fox. She points to the 1920s, when flappers changed the beauty standards to represent thinness, but it wasn't exclusive of different body types because the clothing allowed for more diversity by way of sizing and styling. By the early 20th century, the concept of "plus sizes" existed freely and without stigma, but fashion has gone back and forth on the idea. "Both the pandemic and the new awareness of racism and sexism following #MeToo and BLM caused many to question the prevalence of beauty ideals that often also have a problematic racist and sexist history to them," adds Rabinovitch-Fox.

In 2023, the most revolutionary thing is dressing for the female gaze. Fashion is starting to realise that femininity and womanhood are not so one-dimensional. "It feels like I'm embodying my alter ego," explains Karoline Vitto, of wearing her own work. "I'm embodying a version of myself that I like to access sometimes. It makes me feel like I have a different way of showing my body; not necessarily the traditional, conventional way of doing bodycon." This isn't about objectification, but rather the reclamation of celebrating our bodies through joyful, expressive personality. ■

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Split Spike (2022) by Nabilah Nordin.

Nabilah Nordin in her Sydney studio.

ARTWORK IMAGES: COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND NEON PARC
PORTRAIT: SIMON STRONG

Next in show

As part of the new Vogue Vanguard series, which highlights exciting talent in all creative fields, we select six female artists who represent our visionary spirit right now.

WORDS HANNAH-ROSE YEE AND AMY CAMPBELL

Nabilah Nordin

For Singaporean-Australian sculptor Nabilah Nordin, a regular week in the studio might involve pouring resin on baguettes, encasing a sculpture in deflated balloons and melting kilos of beeswax. "I have 12 different artworks on the go at the moment," the 31-year-old says of her process. "I'm creatively fuelled when I learn new processes, and when the work does something that, to me, is unexplainable."

From contorted shapes sprouting tufts of silky white hair to epoxy-clad armatures, Nordin's work is ambitious yet playful, and no material is too unconventional. "I don't believe in material hierarchies. Construction materials like timber, metal, concrete and adhesives are just as appealing to me as wax, bread, wigs, walnuts and feathers," says the artist. "Whatever the material may be, I am always intrigued by its capacity to invoke seduction or repulsion in the viewer."

Nordin traces her love of colour and form back to when she was 9; she made a birthday card for her mother – it "combined Lip Smacker packaging, string, paper and beads" – and she took the gift wrapping very seriously. "I still do," she grins.

Having spent time living in Malaysia and Indonesia, too, change has always been a constant in the sculptor's life. "I don't like repetition and order, or the feeling of comfort when I'm not challenged," she admits. It's this appetite for challenge that makes Nordin such an exciting artist to watch. At the end of this month, a new large-scale installation of hers will occupy the entrance to the Art Gallery of New South Wales (AGNSW) as part of *The National 4*, while Nordin is also exhibiting work at the National Gallery of Victoria (NGV) during *Melbourne Now*. Don't look away, because her beguiling practice is only set to expand. *Amy Campbell*

Zhu Ohmu

Droopy, bulging, lopsided and wonky, Zhu Ohmu's imperfectly perfect forms are human-like in their demeanour. Yet her distinctive artistic style emerged as a subversive strategy to explore the possibility of emulating the mechanical process of 3D printing sculptures by hand. "It's like an inversion of biomimicry," she explains of the concept.

Born in Taipei, Ohmu's family immigrated to New Zealand when she was seven. Four years later, they moved to Shanghai, then back to Auckland, where the budding artist found a mentor in her high school art teacher. "She saw something in the grotesque and macabre teenage art I was making," recalls Ohmu. She was also a talented mathematician – her love of problem solving informs her practice today – but her maths and arts subjects kept clashing, so she committed to the artistic route.

Ohmu graduated art school with a background in painting and drawing but taught herself how to sculpt by watching videos online and "asking lots of questions at the local kiln". "I love the intimacy of touch that explores the transitional space where clay vacillates between formless and form. My pieces are often pushed to their structural limits."

An exploration of the entangled relationships between machines, human and non-human ecologies, her oeuvre demonstrates the strength, intricacy and intimacy that comes with making by hand. Being part of a new generation of Australian artists who are "alert and educated about issues of social justice and environmental sustainability" excites her. She's the architect of a gravity-defying work soon to be on display at NGV's *Melbourne Now*, and there are a host of fashion and interior brands eager to collaborate with the talent. *AC* →

Zhu Ohmu in her Melbourne studio with ceramic works in progress in the background.
Opposite page: *Ohmu Organ Pipe Mud Dauber #5, (*2021) by Zhu Ohmu.

ARTWORK IMAGES: COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND GALLERY SALLY
DAN-CUTHBERT PORTRAIT: CAT MORRISON

Green Grass and Waterholes, Mutawintji National Park (2020) by Bronte Leighton-Dore.

Bronte Leighton-Dore in her studio in Barragga Bay, New South Wales.

Bronte Leighton-Dore

Creativity has always been a part of 28-year-old painter Bronte Leighton-Dore's life. Creativity – but with activity and curiosity thrown in. "I loved dressing up, making things and being involved in play," she recalls. As a child in Sydney's inner west, a sequence of tiny moments – "exposures", as Leighton-Dore calls them – helped show her the power of art. Whether it was learning to describe the way light would filter through trees; seeing Jane Campion's film *The Piano* with her father; digging out a film camera at the bottom of a showbag from the Easter Show; or a wattle flower costume, which Leighton-Dore wore as part of a contemporary dance concert as a child. "Art was presented to me as a way of expressing myself," she sums up.

Today, Leighton-Dore can often be found painting *en plein air*. Inspired by artists who work in the same landscapes they capture, including David Hockney and Clarice Beckett, she distills the essence in gouache and paper, slices of Australian vistas in soft lines and a bold colour palette.

While painting, Leighton-Dore seeks to be "present and mindful", looking closely and carefully at the world around her. The result is work that produces a visceral response in the viewer. For her landscapes, Leighton-Dore has been a finalist in the Art Gallery of New South Wales Wynne Prize in 2019 and 2021 and in April will debut a new solo exhibition at Sydney's Martin Browne Contemporary Gallery of paintings from Yuin country, near to her new home in Bermagui on the New South Wales South Coast. "I'm excited to give my work some potential space to breathe and allow for intuition and exploration to drop in," Leighton-Dore shares. Always active, always curious, always creative. *Hannah-Rose Yee*

ARTWORKS: COURTESY OF THE ARTISTS AND MARTIN BROWNE CONTEMPORARY, SYDNEY. N SMITH GALLERY, SYDNEY. PORTRAITS: (MANCKTELOW) RHETT HAMMERTON, (LEIGHTON-DORE) ELISE IDIENS

Kyra Mancktelow with a dilly bag.

One continuous string (2021) by Kyra Mancktelow.

Chaboo – Always Was Always Will Be (2022) by Kyra Mancktelow.

Kyra Mancktelow

Freedom. That's what being purely creative means to Kyra Mancktelow, the 26-year-old multidisciplinary artist and Quandamooka woman who seeks to interrogate and dismantle colonial mentalities through her commanding bronze sculptures, woven works and prints. As Mancktelow explains, creativity is "freedom to tell my story, explore untold histories and continue my family's legacy".

Whether she's making artworks for a solo exhibition, a wider survey at institutions such as Brisbane's Institute of Modern Art, or for public art projects – Mancktelow has led projects for Brisbane and Logan City Councils and the University of Queensland – the artist describes her process as ever-changing and fluid. "When inspiration hits, I run with it," she explains. (Though, she admits, creativity often strikes late at night. "No interruptions!") Working in a variety of mediums, including clay, bronze, printmaking, natural fibres and textiles – sometimes at the same time, such as the bronze dillybags cast from woven samples Mancktelow fashioned using historic Indigenous techniques – the artist strives to "educate audiences and strengthen my connection to Country" through her work. Such as *One continuous string* (2021), a handmade garment and dilly bag crafted using a traditional weave from natural fibres and flora collected on Quandamooka Country.

Based in Brisbane, Mancktelow is currently embarking on her doctoral studies, which will involve research into the colonial garments worn by Indigenous Australians and South Sea Islanders. Also this year, she will unveil an exhibition of prints showcasing clothing worn during protests in Australia held at N.Smith Gallery in Sydney. Mancktelow is excited for "institutional change" to take place in the world of art. "There are some amazing new curators coming through who are making space for new and different voices," she reflects. "The voices have always been there. They're not getting the platform they deserve." *HRY*

→

Above: Julia Gutman in her Sydney studio in front of *Once More with Feeling* (2022).

Julia Gutman

She trained as a painter, but Sydney-based artist Julia Gutman really excelled when she swapped brushes for a sewing kit and a collection of donated found textiles. "I wanted to use materials that were loaded with stories as a starting point," she says. "It all began because I'm too sentimental to throw away anything that reminds me of somebody I love."

Gutman describes her upbringing in a Jewish community in Sydney's eastern suburbs as informing the "layered identity" of her monumental "patchworks", which are sketched out, cut and rigorously stitched completely by hand. "I came of age in an oasis by the beach with a cultural narrative heavily impacted by the trauma of the Holocaust. It's an interesting duality to hold, and I think my work reflects a lot of these contrasts."

While her textile pieces may contain nods to classical and renaissance paintings, Gutman's subject matter is distinctly contemporary – friends lounging around in her share house, or moving through "the regularities of daily life". "The figures are all people who have donated materials to the work, so in that sense, they've been actively engaged in their own construction."

As one of six young artists chosen to present work as part of the MCA's *Primavera* showcase, and her largest commission to date overlooking the first-floor staircase inside Sydney's Ace Hotel, 29-year-old Gutman is one of Australia's most exciting early-career artists. With residencies in Italy and Miami lined up for 2023, international acclaim beckons. *AC*

Shireen Taweel

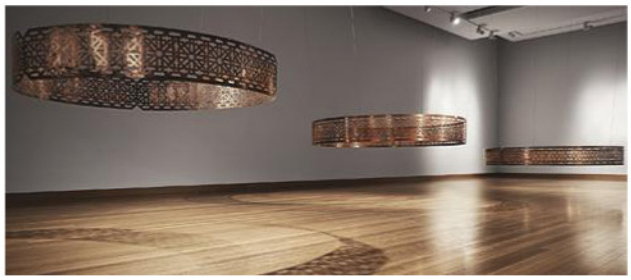
Shireen Taweel loves nothing more than a long day in her Sydney studio. The artist, 32, works primarily with copper, using heritage smithing techniques to pierce, embellish and engrave the sculpted metal with intricate motifs.

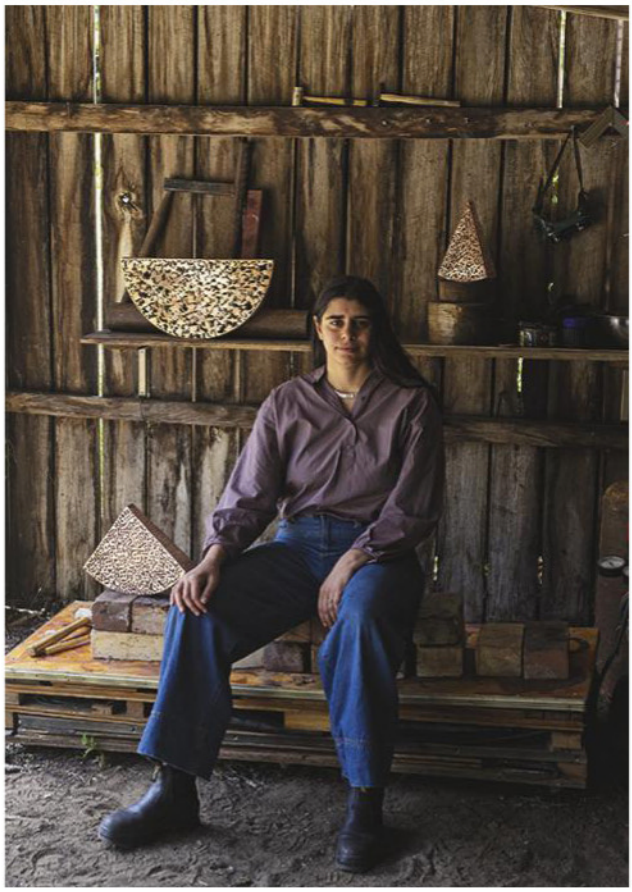
Her skills are on display in *tracing transcendence* (2018-2021), comprising three large wheels of hand-pierced copper and inspired by Taweel's research into the first recorded mosques in Australia, a stunning work that now forms part of the Art Gallery of New South Wales's permanent collection. "I am interested in the humanistic aspect of the sacred and the way that materials are used, be that ephemeral or everlasting," Taweel explains of her inspirations, honed through art school in Tasmania and later, Sydney.

Taweel grew up in Western Sydney in the 90s, the daughter of Lebanese migrants, before relocating to the Northern Beaches. "I was immersed in our family's sense of ceremony," Taweel recalls, something that became a crucial part of her life "as a child of the diaspora, building cultural bridges between experiences of my own and my knowledge of Lebanon."

Taweel's practice often takes her on the road – next month, she begins a three-month stint at the Cité Internationale des Arts in Paris, and another later in the year at the Megalo Print Studio in ACT – all of which fuels her process. "The dual focus of researcher and artisan enables me to present a cultural practice to new audiences through immersive experiences and conceptual thinking." *HRY*

ARTWORK IMAGES: COURTESY OF THE ARTISTS, ART GALLERY OF NSW, LEON SCHOOTS, SULLIVAN+STRUMPF. PORTRAITS: (GUTMAN) SIMON HEWSON, (TAWEEL) NADIA REFAEI





Above: *Bed Politics* (2022) by Julia Gutman. **Right**: Shireen Taweel in her studio in Lutruwita/Tasmania, pictured before her work *Sacred architecture and the celestial body* (2023). **Below**: *tracing transcendence* (2018–21) by Shireen Taweel. Sound composition: Spencer Anthony Reid.

Stories to tell

As the AGNSW unveils its new building Sydney Modern Project, deputy director and director of collections, Maud Page, shares the importance of nurturing female artists.

I'm a sucker for stories. I love strong emotion. The artworks most special to me are those that bring a narrative I haven't thought of before. I have no shame about weeping in front of an artwork. Looking at art is never passive, whether you respond intellectually, exhale on the aesthetic or choke on the visceral, artists are always so generous to take you on their journey.

There is always cadence in whatever we do. We have been planning the exhibitions for the opening of our new building for five years. Gender parity emerged naturally during this process, so it was fantastic to realise we had reached better than parity in our representation of female artists. I personally don't believe in quotas, but with a mindset looking for inclusivity we simply chose the artworks that contained the narratives that needed to be said.

We have a magnificent collection comprising 37,000 artworks across history, geographies and media, so there was much from which to choose! What's been so gratifying is when there's a perfect match of position and artwork, such as Sanné Mestrom's *The Offering (Nyotaimori Reclining Nude)* 2021 and Justene Williams's *Boccioni Babe* (2022), whose sculptures, in a highly visible courtyard in the new building are declarative with their attention to art history and laced with good humour.

Working through the rollercoaster of the global pandemic, we changed every single gallery in our original building and brought to life the new one. I'm so proud our commissioning project was the largest in the gallery's history with nine ambitious new international and national artworks – three of which were by Australian women – Lorraine Connelly-Northey, Karla Dickens and Simryn Gill – plus another 10 commissions for the many exhibitions.

Commissions are like signposts marking an art museum's character. Above the entrance to our original building, Dickens's commissioned glass and copper work also heralds a new chapter for the Art Gallery of New South Wales. Titled *To see or not to see* (2022), it depicts six hooded figures that comment on the choice we have to address our continued colonial history – or not. As visitors then cross the threshold into the building, it's exquisite to encounter the sonic welcome (and goodbye) by Sonya Holowell, uniquely blending Dharawal, Medieval and Inuit sounds and voices.

We're lucky we get to see artists we may not have come across, including increasingly more women artists, with the Archibald, Wynne and Sulman Prizes. Through young Australian artists, such as Bronte Leighton-Dore, a 2019 and 2021 Wynne Prize finalist, Nabilah Nordin, who will be on show in *The National 4* – curated this year by an all-female curatorial team – and Shireen Taweel, whose mesmerising hand-pierced copper sculptures can be seen in the photo shoot in the new building on page 199, we are surrounded by creativity.

It's truly a privilege to work, be challenged, be nurtured and exhilarated by an art ecology that is so visibly occupied by female artists. To end with the words of Karla Dickens: "I'm not a politician; I'm an artist, a storyteller. With my art, I talk about my personal experiences. I don't set out to make political statements. I am political simply because I am who I am – a single mother, a lesbian, a First Australian." ■

Creative license

Labrinth, the polymath creator of Euphoria's unique sound and a Grammy-nominated songwriter and performer, keeps changing the music game. Jake Millar meets him in Sydney.

STYLING HARRIET CRAWFORD PHOTOGRAPHS ROB TENNENT

No one's path in life is ever certain, but if Labrinth had wanted to avoid becoming a world-renowned, Grammy-nominated singer, songwriter and performer, he would have had his work cut out for him. To say he grew up in a musical household is a bit like pointing out the Williams sisters were raised a bit sporty; his family's East London home hummed with a soundtrack that ran the full gamut of tastes and styles and genres.

"If you imagine my house when I was a kid, my sisters would be upstairs singing R'n'B and pop music, and one of my brothers was downstairs playing jazz. Then my other brother would be playing WuTang, dance music, garage – everything you could imagine," says Labrinth, who was born Timothy Lee McKenzie in Hackney, where he grew up with his eight siblings.

But his parents were strictly into gospel. So much so that they encouraged the McKenzie children to form their own gospel group, Mac 9 – inspired by another numerically inclined musical family – and began performing at churches around their area.

After high school, Labrinth worked with his first "proper" artist, British MC Master Shortie, who introduced him to other young musicians. Eventually, he met an emerging rapper called Tinie Tempah and the two collaborated on Tempah's 2010 debut single "Pass Out" from the album *Disc-Overy*. It exploded. The song hit number one in the UK and won a Brit Award on the way to the album being certified double platinum, and turned Labrinth into one of the country's most promising musical talents. Record labels soon started circling.

"It just opened up the floodgates that maybe I'm someone to watch as a producer," he says. "I was about to sign with a company and at the last minute Simon Cowell jumped in with the biggest deal I've ever seen. So, I was like … yeah, maybe I want to go over here."

Labrinth wears a HAULIER jacket, $1,895. PRADA turtleneck, $2,460. CARTIER earrings $5,200, and necklaces, $12,000, and $34,800. Backdrop by Max Rixon.

At the time, many labels were trying to replicate their biggest stars in the hope of finding the next Rihanna, Beyoncé or Jay-Z. But Labrinth wasn't interested in imitating someone else. What attracted him to Cowell's Syco Entertainment wasn't just the money but the fact they let him do his own thing. The two ended up working together for almost a decade, and Labrinth credits him as an early mentor. He also says Cowell's infamous reputation doesn't show the full picture. "Me and Simon are still really cool," he says, although his most recent releases have been distributed via Columbia Records. "Simon is one of the nicest people in the industry. And I was always a fan because I remember hearing he was responsible for the *Power Rangers* theme song, and I play it to my kids now. He doesn't understand he's my hero because of that!"

Labrinth was becoming one of the world's most in-demand artists, working with Rihanna, Ed Sheeran and The Weeknd, whose 2015 Grammy-winning album *Beauty Behind the Madness* featured Labrinth. But he was also gaining attention as a talented vocalist in his own right. He featured on Sia's pop ballad "To Be Human", which led to the pair forming the supergroup LSD, alongside Diplo. Their debut single "Genius" was released in 2018 and the same year LSD received a Grammy nomination for a remix of their single "Audio".

Then in 2019, Labrinth was approached about a new project. American filmmaker →

GROOMING: SIENREE DU
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Eyelids
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Jawline
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"I didn't know what [*Euphoria*] was. But I started writing music immediately because I felt so excited and inspired ... I got to flex my muscles as a creative"

Labrinth wears a GUCCI blazer, $15,950, shirt, $950, and pants, $2,150. CARTIER earrings $5,200, and rings, on right hand, $3,400, and $5,400, and on left hand, index finger, $4,900. RALPH LAUREN tie, $399. His own wedding ring and sunglasses.

Sam Levinson was making a TV show about troubled teens and was looking for someone to handle the score. Featuring Zendaya in the lead role as recovering addict Rue, HBO's *Euphoria* – which airs in Australia on Binge – would cement her place as one of the world's most talented actors, jet Aussie Jacob Elordi onto the world stage, and capture a global audience, in large part due to its searing soundtrack.

"I didn't know what the show was," says Labrinth. "I saw a bit of one episode. But I started writing music immediately because I felt so excited and inspired. I think that's why the music hit people, because it was fun, emotional and exciting for me to go in this very fresh direction. I got to flex my muscles as a creative."

The soaring gospel sounds, the R'n'B beats, the orchestral and electronic arrangements, it was like Labrinth had spent a lifetime collecting musical influences for this moment. The track "Still Don't Know My Name" became a breakout hit, and "All for Us" earned Labrinth his first Emmy. The second season arrived in early 2022 and played even more into Labrinth's gospel roots. "Sam had a very strong vision of what he wanted," he says. "We were talking about Rue's redemption, so there were a lot of organs and cathedral energy. And once he said that to me, I was like, 'Yeah man, I know that shit.'"

It won Labrinth two more Emmy nominations – in addition to his Grammy, Golden Globe and Oscar nominations in 2019 for his work with Beyoncé on *The Lion King* remake.

But Labrinth was also ready to come out from behind the scenes. He began working on his third solo album, *Ends & Begins*, inspired by his relationship with his partner, Muz, with whom he now has two young children. It's due out later this year. And Labrinth has just added yet another role to his multifaceted career, becoming a friend of Cartier. "I've always enjoyed jewellery," says Labrinth, whose own style leans towards a kind of 60s-inspired bohemia. "I've always felt like it adds character. Me and Cartier have built this new relationship and I think we're a match made in heaven."

In November last year the partnership was made official at the opening of the brand's Sydney flagship at 388 George Street, featuring a surprise performance by the man himself. But while the party kicked on until late, Labrinth had an early flight back to LA the next day. There was lots to do.

"I'm going to write an opera and I might be touring soon, which I'm really excited about – I want to go and share some music with people. I'm also writing with millions of artists but I can't tell you who," he says, before pausing. "So you'll just have to wait and see." ■

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EXPERT TIPS

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The upper section of the Husky Riserva Collection dual-zone cabinet can be set between 5-12°C and the lower to 12-18°C.

SOMMELIER NATASHA CAPOL

NATASHA CAPOL
Operations manager and sommelier for Merivale's Narooma venues, Lynch's, Quarterdeck and Queen Chow.

FOOD + WINE *pairing*

"The bitter radicchio, sweet, caramelised, roasted figs and salty, creamy gorgonzola in this Tuscan-style salad complement the floral aromas, acidity, length and elegance of this fresh and lively rosé," Capol says.

HUSKY RISERVA COLLECTION
Mix and match single- and dual-zone cabinets for stylish modern cellaring.
From left: Husky Riserva Collection 154L Left Hinged Wine Cabinet, HUSDSC54MBZYLH, $1,899; Husky Riserva Collection 154L Dual Zone Wine Cabinet with LED Internal Light, HUSWS54DMBZY, $1,999.
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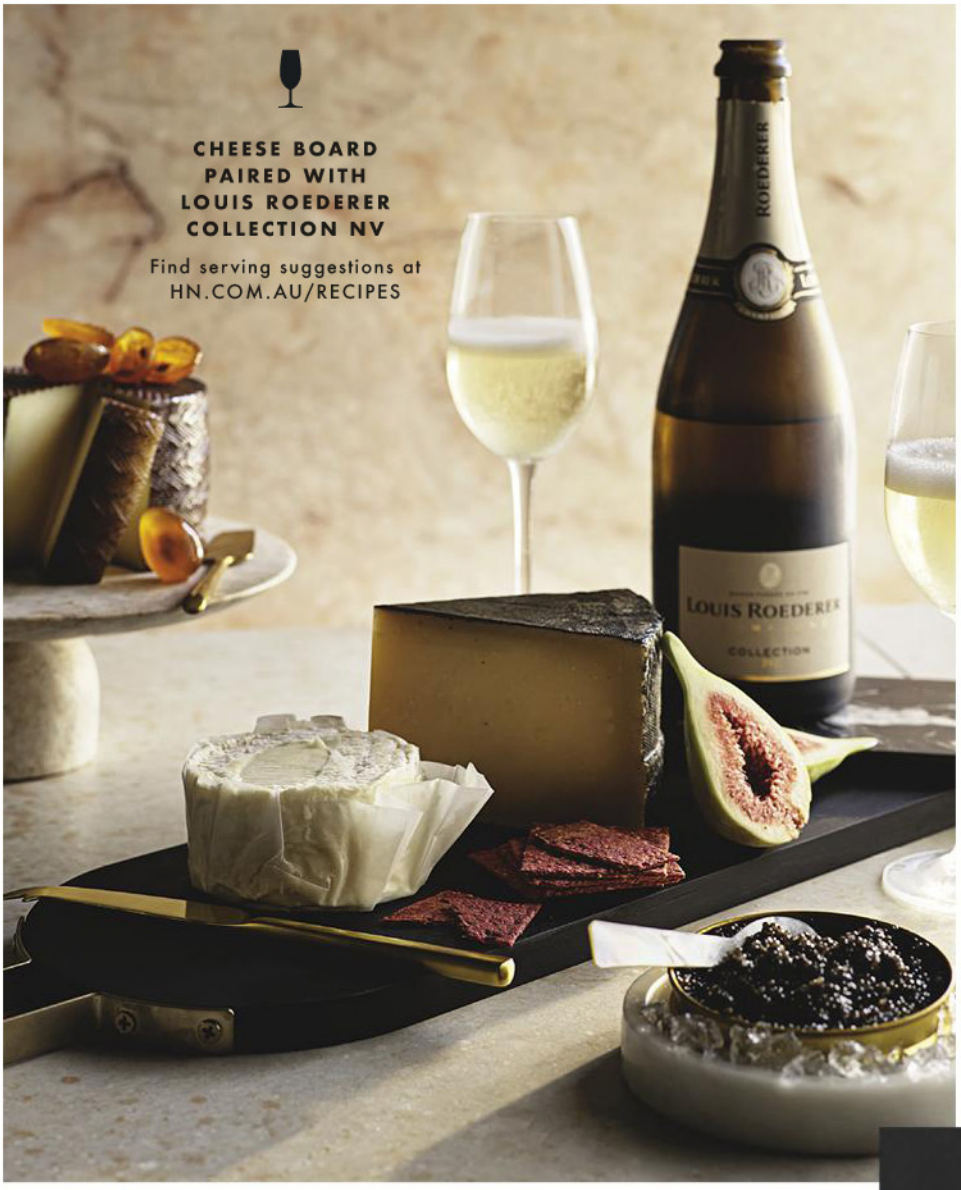

EXPERT TIPS

Sommelier Pak Chan organises his wine cabinets by variety and region and takes care to protect the bottle labels from any damage. "Wines going into storage in my Vintec are always wrapped in cling wrap," he says. "This protects the labels from damage from other bottles, and also protects them from moisture and mould."

THE CELLAR

Vintec's state-of-the-art 126-bottle wine cabinets provide ample space for your collection, while Multi-Temp technology makes it easy to keep different varieties at their ideal drinking temperature. Pair two cellars with a 50-bottle single-zone wine cabinet and 100-beer-bottle beverage centre for an ideal entertainer's set up.

SOMMELIER PAK CHAN

PAK CHAN
Sommelier at acclaimed fine-dining establishment Tetsuya's, in Sydney.

In Multi-Temp mode, the cellar generates a gradient of temperatures, typically graduating from 6°C at the bottom to 18°C at the top.

FOOD + WINE *pairing*

"A cheese like a youthful comté with complex aromas of fruits like apricots and citrus, butter and caramel complements the creaminess of this champagne and accentuates its hints of brioche, lemon curd and stone fruits," Chan says.

A unique design of the Monolith wine cabinet, the InfinityBoard can be pulled out to hold bottles while organising wine or serving guests.

EXPERT TIPS

Wine merchant Giorgio De Maria recommends looking for a wine cabinet with a precise thermometer, controls that make it easy to adjust the humidity and shelves that allow you to lay down bottles so they can be stored horizontally. "For storing, I like the temperature to be 13-14°C and humidity to be about 70 per cent," he says.

THE CABINET

The Liebherr Monolith 100 Bottle Integrated Triple Zone Wine Cabinet makes it easy to store wine collections in style. Features include two sensors in each of its compartments to monitor and maintain temperature levels, a ventilation button for humidity control, an intuitive touch control panel and adaptable shelving with telescopic rails.

WINE MERCHANT GIORGIO DE MARIA

GIORGIO DE MARIA
Co-owner of Italian restaurant, bar and bottle shop Paski Vineria Popolare on Oxford Street in Sydney.

FOOD + WINE *pairing*

"Amber is a rich white with lots of flavour and fruit, texture and also some tannin. The richness works well with the sweetness of the mud crab and lingers beautifully with the butter and wine in this dish," De Maria says.

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Elegant integrated wine cabinets with plenty of space and high-end features.
Two Liebherr Monolith 100 Bottle Integrated Triple Zone Wine Cabinets, EWT9275, $18,990 each (handles and door cabinetry not included).
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EXPERT TIPS

Correct storage is a must for anyone serious about wine, according to sommelier Louella Mathews, whose number-one rules are to keep bottles horizontal and to store them in a cool and humid environment. "I don't know a sommelier who hasn't invested in a quality wine cabinet," she says.

THE CABINET

The Fisher & Paykel Integrated Column Wine Cabinet can be customised with a door panel that matches your cabinetry for seamless integration into your kitchen design. You can also choose your preferred handle style, opt for a left or right hinge, and team the Wine Cabinet with other Integrated Fisher & Paykel Column Fridges and Freezers to create a cohesive kitchen design that complements your lifestyle.

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LOUELLA MATHEWS
Group sommelier at Trippas White Group, wine judge, wine consultant, and co-owner of The Somm & The Winemaker Wines.

FOOD + WINE *pairing*

"Valpolicella can be a great alternative to a dessert wine. The roasted almonds, Angostura bitters and licoricey spice of this wine balance the sweetness of the pudding and link well with the citrus in this dish," Mathews says.

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Setting the stage

More women hold the role of artistic director at theatre companies than ever before in Australia. Jane Albert meets three of the creative forces taking the lead in 2023.

STYLING HARRIET CRAWFORD PHOTOGRAPH RAHEL WEISS

It is no coincidence Courtney Stewart chose myth busting as the heart of her first season of plays as the new artistic director of Brisbane's La Boite Theatre. The very fact of Stewart's appointment busted every myth she grew up with that said Asian-Australians couldn't direct plays or run theatre companies.

"I never thought I'd be a director, because I never saw anyone who looked like me when I was growing up," says Stewart, who is fourth generation Australian-born Chinese. "I'm not a traditional choice and I'm aware of that and feel I have a lot to do to prove myself. But in a good way. I'm excited about striving to do a really good job and changing the face of leadership."

Not only is Stewart the first Asian-Australian artistic director of a state or mid-tier theatre company, she is one of three recent female appointments, including Anne-Louise Sarks running Melbourne Theatre Company (MTC), and Kate Champion who holds the reins at Black Swan Theatre Company in Perth. Alongside Lee Lewis, artistic director of Queensland Theatre since 2020, it brings to four the number of women in charge, an unprecedented number in the history of Australian theatre. Throw into the mix the fact that both Stewart and Sarks are working mothers of young children – the only parents among their cohort of theatre artistic directors in this country – and you can't help but feel we are witnessing a profound moment in time.

"I'm so proud to be the first female artistic director of MTC but I wish it wasn't something that needed to be celebrated in 2023, I want us to be beyond that," says Sarks. "But the reality is it's taken a long time and is a really big moment."

Sarks arrives in the role after a celebrated career directing theatre around Australia and the world, including Belvoir's *Medea* and *Avalanche* at the Barbican in London; while she has previously run theatre companies in London and Melbourne.

Also a practising director, Champion has worked across theatre, dance theatre, opera, musicals and film. The award-winning founder of dance theatre company Force Majeure has worked with everyone from Nicole Kidman to the English National Opera and London's DV8 Physical Theatre.

An actor-director, Stewart returns to her hometown of Brisbane from Sydney, where she was directing associate at Sydney Theatre Company and was artistic associate at Contemporary Asian Australian Performance.

Stewart's 2023 program celebrates diversity and explores identity in contemporary Australia with a focus on local artists. "I'm looking at how we drive towards social cohesion and I think these plays do that, they reach for cultural empathy, and storytelling is the best way to spark that," she says, citing world premieres *The Poison of Polygamy*, Thai-Australian playwright Anchuli Felicia King's adaptation of Wong Shee Ping's novel exploring migration and the myth of the "good" Chinese

Above, from left: Kate Champion, centre; a scene from *Dirty Birds*, part of Champion's 2023 repertoire for Black Swan; Courtney Stewart's debut season at La Boite will include the play *Capricorn*, pictured here.

Above, from left: Stewart heads up Brisbane's La Boite; a scene from Black Swan's *Things I Know To Be True*; a mood board in the rehearsal room for *Bernhardt/Hamlet* at the Melbourne Theatre Company (MTC).

citizen, directed by Stewart; plus *Cut Chilli* by playwright, journalist and rapper Chenturan Aran, a comedy about an adopted Sri Lankan man trying to find his fit in Australia.

Sarks is proud to reveal six of the MTC's 12 works are new Australian plays, but says it also presents a challenge. "My vision for the company is embracing new perspectives, telling stories about who we are and shaping the cultural conversation." *Sunday*, for example, is a new work by Anthony Weigh that explores the stories and myths surrounding Heide Museum founder Sunday Reed, while *Bloom* is a humorous new musical that turns one of Australia's shameful recent failures – aged care – into a vision of hope and possibility.

Champion's aim is to nurture local talent and capitalise on the unique perspective Western Australia's isolation gives local creatives. She will direct the McElhinney sisters Hayley (*Mystery Road: Origin*) and Mandy (STC's *The Tempest*) in *Dirty Birds*, a new work by the sisters about growing up in Perth with Irish-English parents. "It has the DNA of WA steeped in it but also their theatrical history; it's very funny, but it's that dark humour." At the other end of the scale is *Straight Talk* by Broome dance theatre company Marrugeku, which explores, through spoken word and dance, First Nations and refugee stories of prison and detention centres. "It's quite confronting but also joyful and uplifting and challenges what theatre can be."

The *Vogue* Australia shoot was the first time Stewart, Sarks and Champion had met in person. Acknowledging the female artistic directors who went before them, Robyn Nevin, Marion Potts and Kate Cherry among them, the three new directors were excited about the fresh perspectives they hope to impart. "It's bringing much-needed fresh eyes to an industry when we're having to figure out how to stay relevant in an increasingly digitalised world," says Stewart. "A lot of us have other things going on … we bring different experiences and communities with us."

Champion agrees women bring a different perspective and says she's grateful for the support of other women. "Until you're in the seat, you don't know what it's like. We've nicknamed ourselves 'the *Vogue* support group'," she laughs.

While there is a collegiate relationship between all state artistic directors including STC's Kip Williams, State Theatre Company of South Australia's Mitchell Butel and Belvoir's Eamon Flack, Sarks says there's something special about sharing the journey with Champion and Stewart.

"It's so valuable because they really understand the challenges and all of are making the adjustment at the same time," says Sarks, who was appointed 10 days after son Arlo was born and, like Champion and Stewart, moved cities for the job. "It's exciting, really exciting. I feel so lucky."

Anne-Louise Sarks of MTC.

Sarks's MTC program includes the celebrated play *Is God Is*.

FRANCES ANDRIJICH, JO DUCK, STEPHEN HENRY, PIA JOHNSON, DAVID KELLY

From left: Anne-Louise Sarks wears a STUDIO AMELIA dress, worn as shirt, $1,095. ESSE skirt, $950. TIFFANY & CO. necklace, $840, and bracelet, $20,000. GUCCI gloves, $885, and shoes, $1,525; Kate Champion wears a STUDIO AMELIA top, $600. MANNING CARTELL skirt, $399. TIFFANY & CO. earrings, $2,200, bracelet $18,400, and rings, $3,850, $3,300, and $1,850. GUCCI shoes, $1,525; Courtney Stewart wears a BIANCA SPENDER top, $495. ST. AGNI skirt, $329. HELEN KAMINSKI hat, $475. BULGARI necklace, $103,000, and ring, $22,500. GUCCI gloves, $990, and shoes, P.O.A.

In the frame

Trailblazing Australian cinematographer Mandy Walker is the third woman ever to be nominated for an Oscar in her craft, following her work on *Elvis*. Here, she shares her love of film with Hannah-Rose Yee.

Light has a special quality in Australia, says Mandy Walker. The 59-year-old cinematographer has traversed the country with her camera on films as diverse as the intimate, sensual *Lantana* and two mononymous Baz Luhrmann epics (*Australia*, *Elvis*). The light here is "stronger and more aggressive" Walker muses, a world of bold shadows and stark contrast. In the sun-blistered outback of South Australia, where she captured Mia Wasikowska on a gruelling solo journey across the country in *Tracks*, or in the sweeping vastness of the Kimberley, where Walker set the scene in Luhrmann's swoony period drama *Australia*, there is also the sense of something beyond. "It really affects the way that you shoot," Walker reflects. "On *Tracks*, I feel that in the images – the spirituality of the environment."

Walker has just spent the past year in London, where the light is … different. "It was the first time I'd shot a movie in Europe," she shares, "and I had to adjust to that and be able to work with a softer light." That movie is 2024's *Snow White*, Disney's latest reinterpretation of its animated classics. *West Side Story*'s breakout actor Rachel Zegler, who stars in the film as the fairest princess of them all, says that Walker's gift is her unique vision. "Mandy has an eye for the massive," Zegler enthuses to *Vogue* Australia. "Things the rest of us can't quite see just yet … She brings the impossible to life. All one has to do is watch one of her films to see so."

Walker can't remember a time in her life when she wasn't going to the movies. She grew up in Melbourne, the daughter of parents who loved the arts and would wheel her around "in the pram" to galleries and, later, to the State Film Centre. Watching the movies of German auteur Wim Wenders, as conveyed by his longtime cinematographer Robby Müller, helped cement the power of this partnership; the director of photography is the person who translates the filmmaker's vision into moving images. "I started to see how being a cinematographer can create a whole new world for people," Walker reflects.

She dropped out of university at 18 to work as a runner on a movie set, delivering the day's film to the lab. ("In my own little Sigma car!") Small jobs on documentaries came next. "I worked my way up, I didn't go to film school," says Walker. "And I'm really glad I did it that way because it meant I could observe how a film set runs." She watched how the director and cinematographer worked in tandem with each other. She taught herself how to light a scene. And at 25, she shot her first film, the 1990 Australian drama *Return Home*. "I was nervous and scared," she recalls, "but I thought, 'I've got to take a leap.'"

The next leap occurred in 2004 when she met Luhrmann. The pair initially connected to shoot what the director calls a "mini movie" – *not* a commercial – for Chanel No. 5, starring Nicole Kidman. In 2006, Luhrmann enlisted Walker to helm his $100 million rural romance *Australia*. A decade later Luhrmann once again called on Walker to bring his genre-defying Elvis biopic to life. "From the first day we start working, we have Leica cameras hanging around our necks," Luhrmann reflects, of his longtime collaborator. "So we start to lens and see things together, almost in lockstep." The film is an astonishing technical achievement: breathtaking shot-for-shot recreations of concert footage, dizzying crane zooms and brilliant lighting befitting the rhinestone jumpsuit-wearing King.

"Mandy, the camera has to dance with Elvis," Luhrmann advised her. So Walker and her team – camera operators, dolly grips, a crew she proudly shares was 40 per cent female, learned the sequences at the same time as the "amazing" Austin Butler. "When Austin was rehearsing, we were

From left: Mandy Walker scouting locations; on set with her stills camera; with director Baz Luhrmann behind the scenes on *Australia* (2008).

rehearsing," Walker recalls. "We knew his moves *exactly*." The result is footage that captures the specific moment that Butler's star is born: when the actor, as Elvis, leans back in his leather jacket and flashes an incendiary grin right down the barrel of the camera during the icon's legendary 1968 comeback special. "Baz and I, when we work together, we stand in front of the monitors," Walker says. "And sometimes something will happen and we both just look at each other. We've seen something – Austin's just done a look, or there's a connection." It's lightning in a bottle, it's movie magic. Luhrmann points to another sequence: the devastating separation between Elvis and Priscilla (Olivia DeJonge), which was shot in one continuous take as the actors ran between sets. "Now most DPs would probably find that too difficult of a request," Luhrmann shares, "but within seconds, Mandy had the whole crew ready with handheld cameras hidden in cupboards … This allowed incredible spontaneous emotion to explode in front of the camera."

"We've got to find good women. And if there aren't any, we have to train them"

For her work on the film, Walker received the AACTA award for Best Cinematography. It is the first time in AACTA history that a woman has won; globally, there has never been a female cinematography Oscar winner, which could change if Walker – nominated for *Elvis* – wins this month. Only six per cent of cinematographers are women, according to a 2021 study, and though change is happening "it is taking too long", Walker declares. "When I first started, people on set – these buff blokes – would stand back and watch me carry everything, and that was a little bit disparaging," she recalls. "I really just ignored it. I knew I could do it, and I tried to be very positive all the time." But those experiences stay with you, as did the one when Walker, aged 15, was told 'We don't have girls on the camera department' during work experience at a local TV station.

As Catherine Martin, Luhrmann's partner in life and art, puts it: "Her job is incredibly physically demanding, whether it's to lug a camera around, or just because so much of exterior shooting is punishing in terms of being in the wind, the rain, the cold and the sun. Mandy does all of this with extraordinary good grace and extreme artistry … All of those qualities matched with unparalleled talent, in an extremely male-dominated space, are a pleasure to behold." Walker's prerogative is to encourage more women to join the industry, whether through teaching or by demanding better of her teams. "We've got to find good women," she charges her department heads. "And if there aren't any, we have to train them."

Even now, 30 years into her career, Walker learns something new on every set. She had never made a musical before *Elvis*; *Snow White* introduced her to the world of the 3D camera. She would like to do a Bond movie next. "Because I've never done a really high-action film," she explains, "and I think if you had asked me at 15, [Bond] would've been the film I'd have said then, too." But everything always comes back to the story. "For me, if I'm drawing attention to what I'm doing, then I'm not doing my job," Walker explains. The technical part of the role – the lenses, the cameras, "the cranes I'm going to use, the remote heads I'm going to use, the lights" – is an exciting challenge. But the real work? Walker places her hand on her heart. "It always then comes from here."

SEAN FADEN, JAMES FISHER, KIMBERLY FRENCH

Home truths

More than a decade after she became the youngest winner of the Booker prize, Eleanor Catton is back with a new novel, this time turning her attention to the modern world. By Divya Venkataraman.

Has the world drifted further apart? For Eleanor Catton, that isn't so much a philosophical question as a physical one. When she and her husband were travelling from their now home in the UK back to Catton's home country of New Zealand at the end of 2022 for the first time since the start of the pandemic, they conferred. "We were like, I'm sure this is further away than it used to be," she says. Though she admits that feeling could have been the result of the toddler sandwiched between them. Her wide, warm smile just about fills the screen as she speaks from her parents' home in Christchurch, where the author and her husband have been holidaying over summer with their two-year-old daughter.

It was in Cambridge, England, "a world away", that Catton wrote *Birnam Wood* (Granta, $32.99), her first book since *The Luminaries*, the 2013 novel that would go on to win the Booker Prize and make her, then 28, the youngest winner in history. Because of New Zealand's closed borders at the time of writing her third novel, Catton, now 37, was thinking about a place she was unable to return to. "It certainly had a psychological effect on what I was writing," she says. "Because I felt excluded. I mean, I was legally excluded from the country." She believes the physical distance gave her a certain kind of "satirical freedom", an ability to "be critical of the country" from afar. *Birnam Wood*, which takes its name from the forest of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, follows a gang of quasi-anarchist vigilante farmers who encounter Robert Lemoine, an enigmatic billionaire, on a plot of rural farmland they intend to secretly cultivate. Lemoine, it turns out, has his →

IMAGE: ALAMY ARTWORK: IMOGEN FROST

Creative Direction BROOKE DOWN, THE FLOWER BAR CO., Creative Production ELLE SPENCE, THE FLOWER BAR CO., Photographer SAM CLARE, Model OLIVIA PORTIA-WELLS, Hair and Make Up Artist HOLLY FRASER, Dress CUSTOM COUTURE, Venue THE VALLEY ESTATE
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own plans for the land, ostensibly involving a post-apocalyptic bunker – but he is willing to work with them. What follows is a game of cat and mouse where the players keep switching masks and donning each other's whiskers and tails; a maze of political and personal rivalries, all set against the backdrop of impending climate disaster.

Writing about the present is tricky business. "The risk is definitely higher," says Catton. "It's not that the past is stationary and that the present is in flux. They're both in flux. But the thing about the present is that you are never quite sure what's going to endure."

One thing is certain: she's not interested in depicting a sanitised, tourist-brochure version of New Zealand. In *Birnam Wood*, she explores complex philosophical conundrums through the characters who live them out, and through the institutions that prop up wrongdoing. Catton also wants to question the image the country has of itself as moral and virtuous on the world stage.

"All countries have their own kinds of exceptionalism, don't they?" she asks. "I think there's a lot of complacency built on this national image of New Zealand as a very benign, inoffensive place."

Catton makes no reservations about the fact that Lemoine's character is inspired by real-life events. "Granting Peter Thiel citizenship [of New Zealand] is not a trivial matter," she says of the PayPal co-founder and billionaire, who was awarded citizenship in 2011 after spending just 12 days in the country. "New Zealand's cosying up to the super-rich means that the country's functioning like a tax haven, as it has for many years. There's blood on the country's hands."

It's this kind of straight talk about her home that has earned Catton the ire of some of her compatriots. Many of her most strident critics are, for what it's worth, older white men.

"There's this expectation in New Zealand that cultural figures will represent the country in the best possible light, and that's your duty. I think that there's this great panic when people don't do that."

For Catton, writing about New Zealand as a New Zealander is like being in a tight-knit family, where her sins and triumphs are equally magnified within its confines. "It's a very undesirable position to be in because no one person can represent the country. I mean, it's just absurd." she says. "The stakes get both smaller and higher at the same time."

Catton's life has changed a lot in the 10 years since winning one the most prestigious prizes in the English language. She went from renting a "scummy little basement flat" in Auckland, to her presence being requested at every major literary festival in the world. It was at one of these that she met some screenwriters and got pulled headlong into their world. She adapted *The Luminaries* for screen, and later, reinterpreted Jane Austen's *Emma* into a film starring Anya Taylor-Joy and Bill Nighy. She met her Chicago-born husband at the Iowa Writers' Workshop, before the two settled in Auckland, moved to London, then welcomed a baby daughter. But as much as her life has changed, so has the world around her.

"I just could not imagine writing *The Luminaries* now," Catton says. "And that's partly because I don't think people would want to read that now." In it, she, a white woman, adopts the voices of different ethnic minority characters, from a Māori greenstone hunter to a Chinese goldminer. She is referring to the fact that today there is greater acknowledgment that a white author can't meaningfully convey the experiences and complexity of a minority character in the way someone of their own ethnicity could.

"But nothing has changed for the writer in the sense that the reader is ultimately always the person who has the power to say whether you've succeeded or failed," she continues. "I think what has changed is who those readers are, which is really exciting."

Eleanor Catton.

"I just could not imagine writing *The Luminaries* now ... and that's partly because I don't think people would want to read that now"

In this book, Catton's characters – and the subjects of her skewering – are all white, and the focus is the age and class differentials that divide them. In a way, they are each generational archetypes: the vigilante farmers as activist millennials; Lemoine as the Gen X hyper-capitalist; a couple, the Darvishes, boomers who rest on their institutional clout. Catton is herself a millennial, born in 1985, and counts herself, accordingly, part of an "unlucky generation" that graduated into the financial crisis and had young children during the pandemic.

"I do feel a lot of generational indignation," she says. "Especially towards the baby boomers, because I see them as having received a lot of the spoils of the world we live in and now dismantling a lot of institutions that they benefited from when they were young." But the novel certainly doesn't land on one villain or one hero: its rotating Macbeths each offer a different viewpoint to the question of generational blame and culpability.

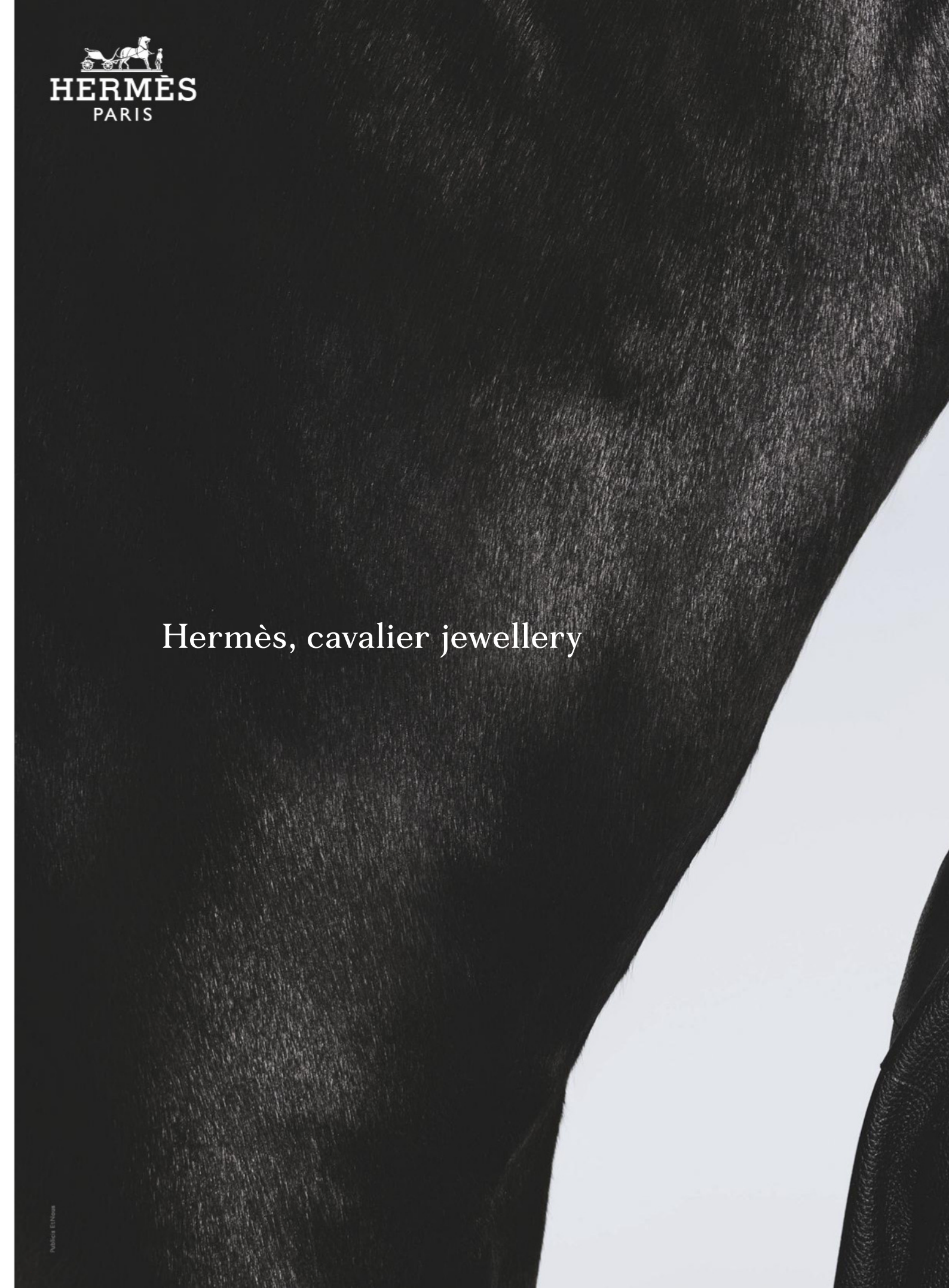
Readers might be shocked by *Birnam Wood*'s ending, but Catton makes it clear that she is not a nihilist. Each character in her book effects change through their choices, and each choice propels their story forward. "In order to believe in goodness – radical human goodness – you have to admit human evil," she says. "There are evil people in the world, but in a way that's not cause for despair because that means the good is possible … And as a writer, you need to believe a better future is possible."

Catton was first thrust into the literary spotlight a decade ago, at a young age. So how does she feel about standing under it once again, given her new novel's thorny and pertinent subject matter? "I feel a little bit more invincible. I don't know, maybe that's foolish. I feel like it's because I'm needed now domestically, in a way that makes the rest of the world really fall away."

The world may have changed, but so has Catton's – and that might make all the difference. ■

MURDO MACLEOD

HERMÈS
PARIS
Hermès,
cavalier jewellery
Publicis EtNous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Publicis Et Nous

HERMÈS
PARIS
Hermès,
cavalier jewellery

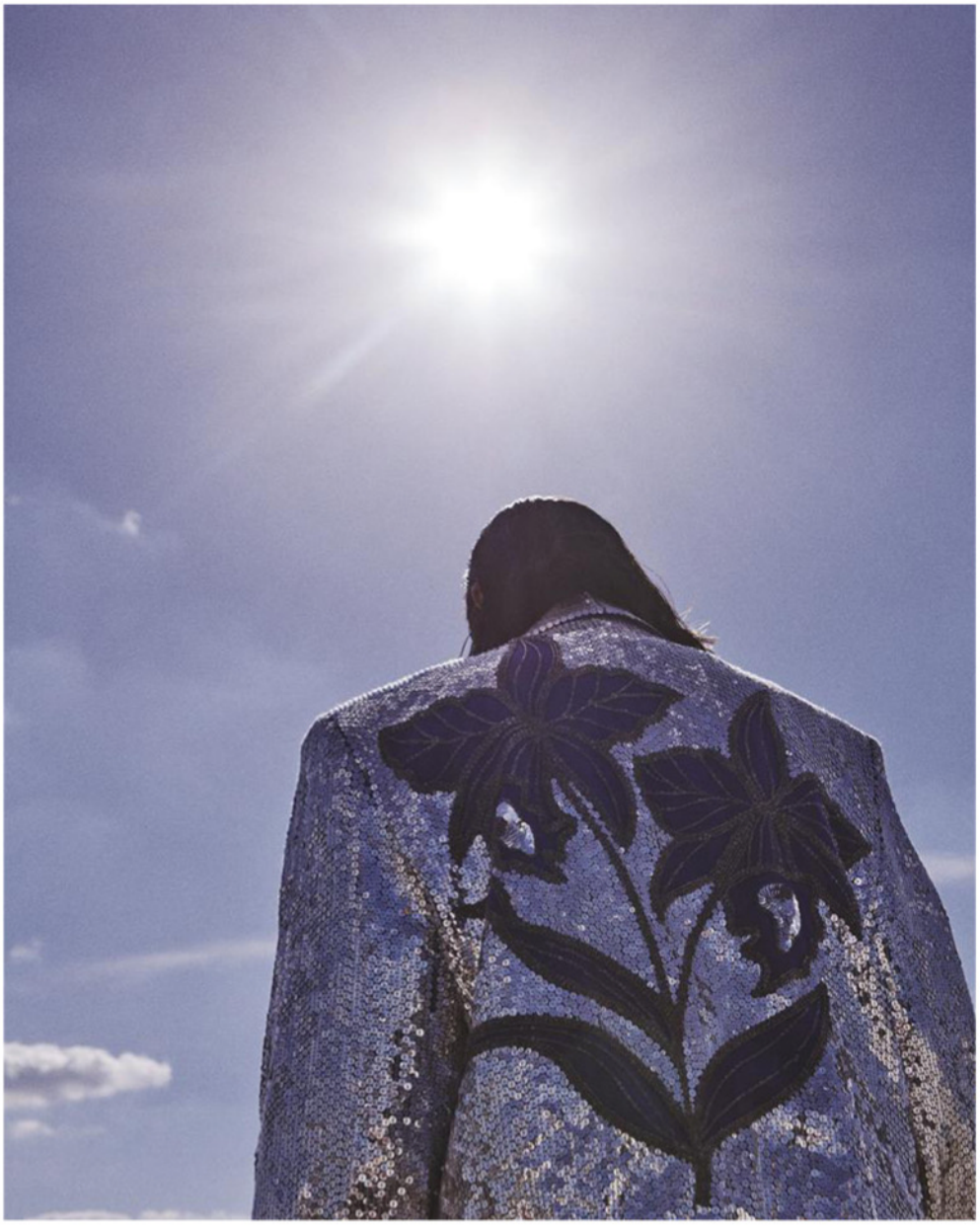
VOGUE
AUSTRALIA

Lightness of being

Hailey Bieber wears a SAINT LAURENT dress, $10,405. TIFFANY & CO. bangle, $51,600, and ring, $12,100.

DAN JACKSON
ALL PRICES APPROXIMATE DETAILS AT VOGUE.COM.AU/WTB

HEAVENLY

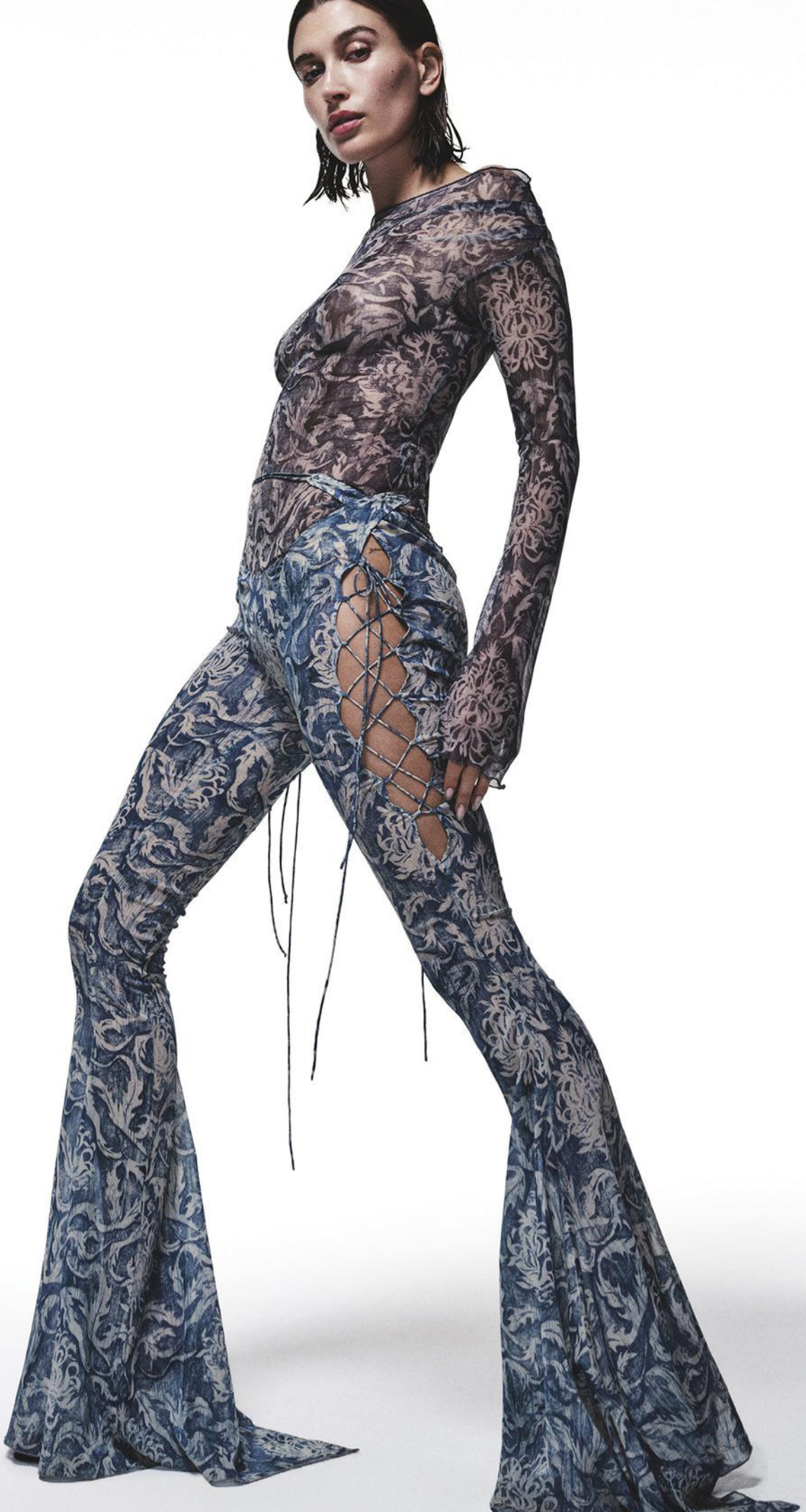


CREATURE

Under the sun's searing rays, Hailey Bieber casts the silhouettes of the season; second-skin, undone, optimistic, comfortable with who she is. A new kind of bright for now, that illuminates the path ahead.

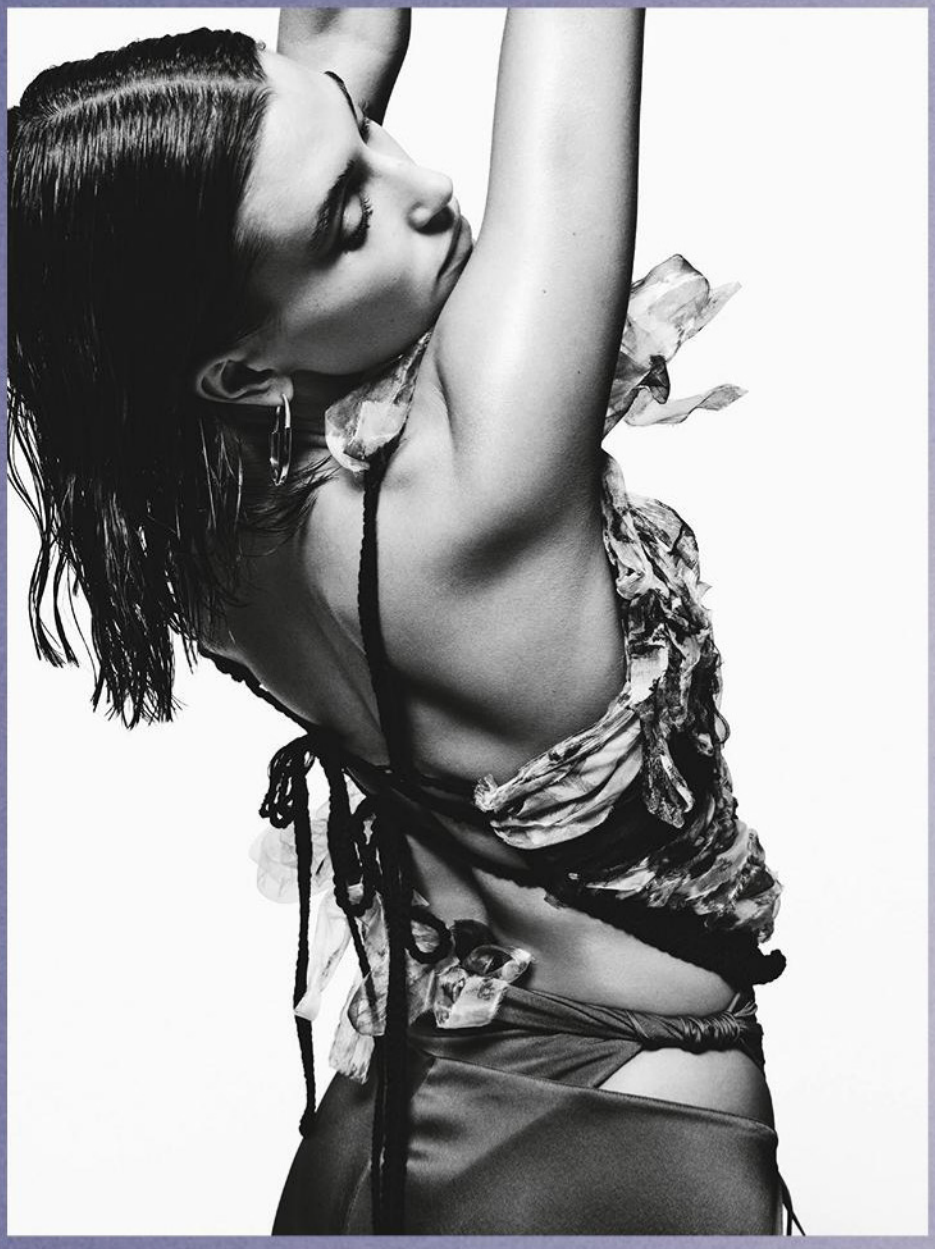
Styled by Christine Centenera. Photographed by Dan Jackson.

This page: GUCCI jacket, P.O.A. **Opposite page**: CHRISTIAN DIOR bralette, $2 300, boxer shorts, P.O.A., and socks, $770, worn as gloves. All prices approximate; details at Vogue.com.au/WTB.



DAN JACKSON

Opposite page: KNWLS top, $470, and pants, $2,075. OTTOLINGER shoes, $525.
This page: BURBERRY crystal bralette, $5,500, and bodysuit, P.O.A. JACQUEMUS skirt, P.O.A.



DAN JACKSON

DRIES VAN NOTEN top, $1,130. SUPRIYA LELE skirt, $940, and briefs, P.O.A. TIFFANY & CO. earrings, $15,100.

DAN JACKSON

Opposite page: LOUIS VUITTON dress, $22,200. TIFFANY & CO. bangle, $10,500, and ring, on right hand, $12,100. Her own wedding rings.
This page: GUCCI jacket, P.O.A. BURBERRY crystal bralette, $5,500, and bodysuit, P.O.A. JACQUEMUS skirt, P.O.A.

PACO RABANNE dress,
$12,290, and headpiece, $2,135.

As they watch the sun set over the horizon from their Californian home, one of the world's most talked-about couples – he, one of the biggest singers and performers of our time, she a world-famous model and founder of skincare brand Rhode – sit down together for *Vogue* Australia. Marking the first time Hailey Bieber has been interviewed by her husband of four years, a new era feels imminent for the flourishing mogul, who in addition to the line she founded last year, also has a YouTube channel where she interacts with millions of her fans. While others her age are still finding their path, Bieber knows what she wants, and naturally, the rest of the world is seeing the light.

JUSTIN BIEBER: "Welcome everybody, to our home. We are in Beverly Hills, California, and are looking at a beautiful sunset. My wife is wearing a Kid Cudi hoodie with some Daisy Dukes, and we're gonna get into some questions. I'm gonna start off by saying, I love you, baby."

HAILEY BIEBER: "Love you. Thanks for doing this."

JB: "Of course … What is the most rewarding thing about building Rhode?"

HB: "The most rewarding thing for me has been when someone will come up to me and express how much they love the brand and how much they love the product."

JB: "Love that. Do you have a mission statement for Rhode?"

HB: "I would say my mission statement for Rhode, and even beyond Rhode, my mission statement for my style and aesthetic in general is, 'less is more.'"

JB: "Love it. What would you say to someone who is looking to start a business?"

HB: "I would say that if you're looking to start a business, it's taking a leap of faith, but I think that it's a really good leap to take, and you should definitely trust your gut and trust your instincts. But also, be okay with the mishaps that happen. There's so many ups, but there are also downs, like anything in life. I think if you can take the bumps in the road and use them to improve your business as you move forward and as you expand, then it's only something that helps you along the way. I think just being okay with that."

JB: "You have a great group of friends. Who has inspired you, or rather, inspired the business side of you?"

HB: "It would be really hard for me to choose one person, because I feel like I have a lot of friends who are really owning their space in business. But what I will say is that it's really inspiring to be surrounded by other people who have founded their own businesses and have gone on that founder's journey. It's been helpful for me to be able to have that support and be able to have honest conversations about the highs and the lows of building a brand."

JB: "As your husband, watching you build this company has been the coolest."

HB: "Thank you." →

DAN JACKSON

SIMONE ROCHA bodysuit, $1,245. RETROFETE bralette, $770. MARC JACOBS skirt, $9,949. TIFFANY & CO. ear clips, $58,000.

JB: "What is your favourite thing about being married?"

HB: "Mmm … My favourite thing about being married is honestly the companionship I feel we have. Genuinely, you are my best friend in the entire world. There's nobody I would rather spend more time with or do anything with."

JB: "Do you have a favourite song right now?"

HB: "I really love the SZA *SOS* album right now, the whole album."

JB: "If you could choose one song off that album?"

HB: "Oh, my goodness …"

JB: "What would you choose? In this very moment that you've been listening to it … I know you've been listening to, um, what is that one … damn. My favourite is 'Gone Girl' right now."

HB: "Right. I really like 'Snooze', 'Blind' …"

JB: "We were listening to one specifically …"

HB: "Oh, 'Far!'"

JB: "'Far.'"

HB: "I love 'Far' right now, you're right, that one's my favourite. But also … the new song that you just recorded, I can't stop listening to right now. Nobody knows what that is yet."

JB: "What is your biggest fashion regret?"

HB: "I feel like I have a lot, but the biggest one that comes to mind in this moment is, a couple of years ago I wore this pink … it was this boxy-looking vest dress, and I thought it was going to be the cutest thing ever. I wore it, and I saw the photographs after and it legitimately looked like I was inside a box. I looked like a present, and it was so bad."

JB: "Oh, that's good. Since this is *Vogue*, what are your top wardrobe tips?"

HB: "My top wardrobe tip would be you can never go wrong with the basics. By that I mean a great pair of jeans, a white tee, a good pair of loafers and a great leather jacket. I think you can never go wrong with those essentials."

JB: "What have you been dreaming about?"

HB: "Right in this moment, I keep dreaming about the pasta we're gonna devour tonight."

JB: "You're on the cover of Christine's first issue as editor-in-chief of *Vogue* Australia. What would you like to say to her?"

HB: "What I would like to say is, first, I'm very honoured to be on her first cover as the new editor of *Vogue* Australia. Christine has always been somebody I've really looked up to in the fashion space, and I've always really, really loved and admired her style. I feel like the way she and I both look at essentials and have a very curated wardrobe, and the way we look at style and fashion are very, very similar. I feel like she and I have a lot of synergy in the work we've done together – I feel like she really gets me, and I really get her. So, it's just been awesome developing a relationship with her, and I think that she's amazing, and I love getting to work with her."

JB: "I love that. Synergy is such a good word."

HB: "Synergy!"

JB: "Well, there you have it folks. Hope you enjoyed!"

HB: "Thank you, baby."

DAN JACKSON

KNWLS top, $470,
and pants, $2,075.

ALAÏA bodysuit, belt, tights and shoes, all P.O.A. TIFFANY & CO. bangles, on left arm, $10,500, and $21,200, and on right arm, $54,500, and on right hand, TIFFANY & CO ring, $12,100. Her own wedding rings.

MIU MIU top, $1,400, briefs, $490, and shoes, $3,000. TIFFANY & CO. ear clips, $58,000, and bangles, on right arm, $54,500, and on left arm, $10,500, and $21,200.

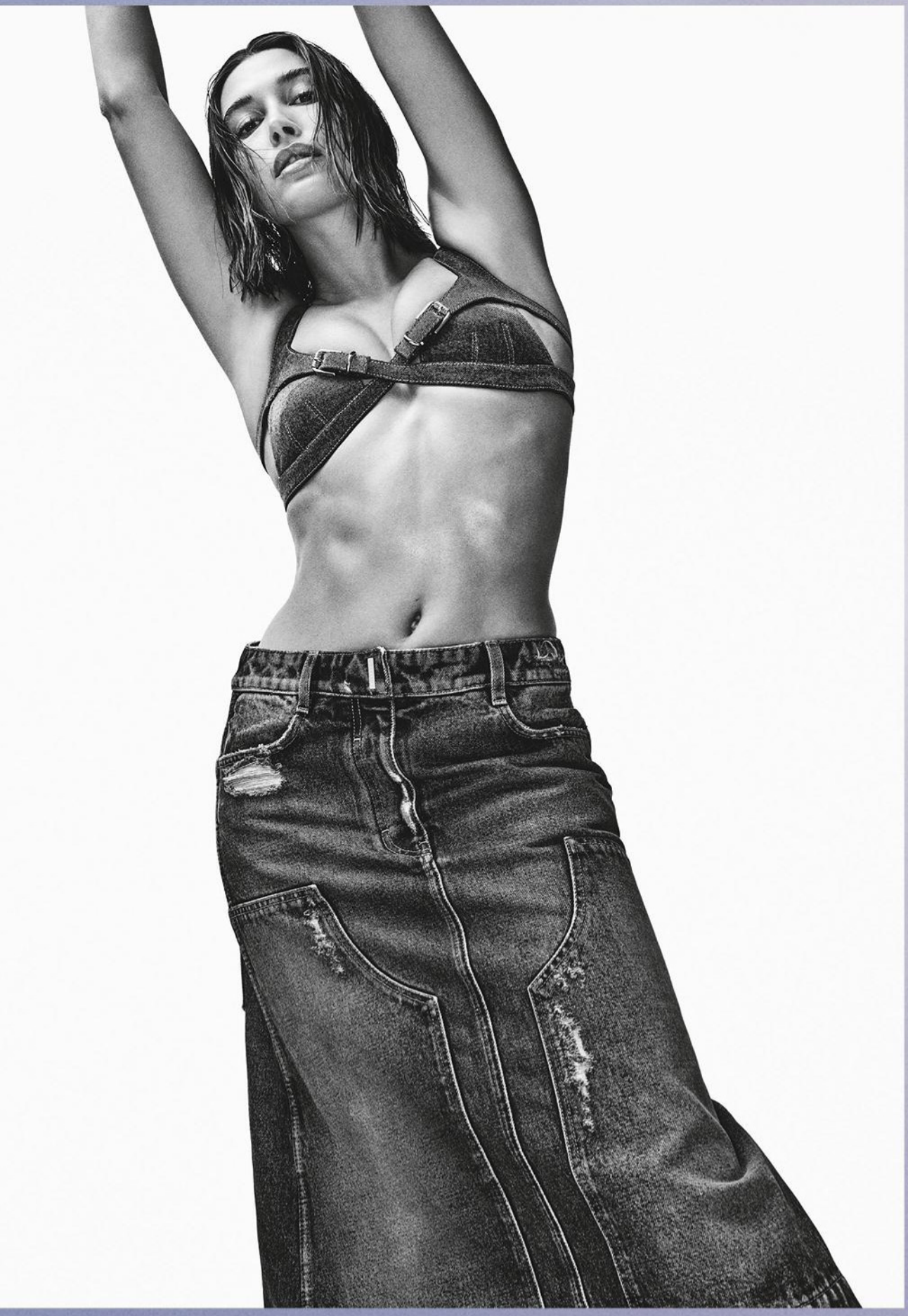
DAN JACKSON

This page: BURBERRY crystal bralette, $5,500, and bodysuit, P.O.A.
Opposite page: CHANEL dress, $23,150, from the Chanel boutiques. Her own wedding rings.

DAN JACKSON

DAN JACKSON

Opposite page: LOEWE dress, P.O.A., and shoes, $2,800. TIFFANY & CO. bangles, on right arm, $10,500, and on left arm, $54,500.
This page: LUDOVIC DE SAINT SERNIN dress, $50,000, and briefs, P.O.A. TIFFANY & CO. bangles, $51,600, and $10,500.



Opposite page: GIVENCHY top and skirt, both P.O.A. **This page**: MM6 MAISON MARGIELA top, $185, and bodysuit, $475. RUI dress, worn as skirt, $1,550. OTTOLINGER shoes, $525.

Hair: Teddy Charles. Make-up: Romy Soleimani. Production: Rosco Production.

DAN JACKSON

FOLLOW

Days without end, warm skin, languid lengths and a new wave of

THE SEA

effortless dressing that recalls all the shimmering last rays of summer.

Styled by Petta Chua. Photographed by Jake Terrey.

Left: LOUIS VUITTON dress and shoes, both P.O.A. **Right:** LOUIS VUITTON top, pants and shoes, all P.O.A.
All prices approximate; details at Vogue.com.au/WTB.

This page: GIORGIO ARMANI top, $9,700, and skirt, $19,500. BULGARI ring, $3,160. **Opposite page**: BURBERRY dress, bralette and earrings, all P.O.A.

JAKE TERREY

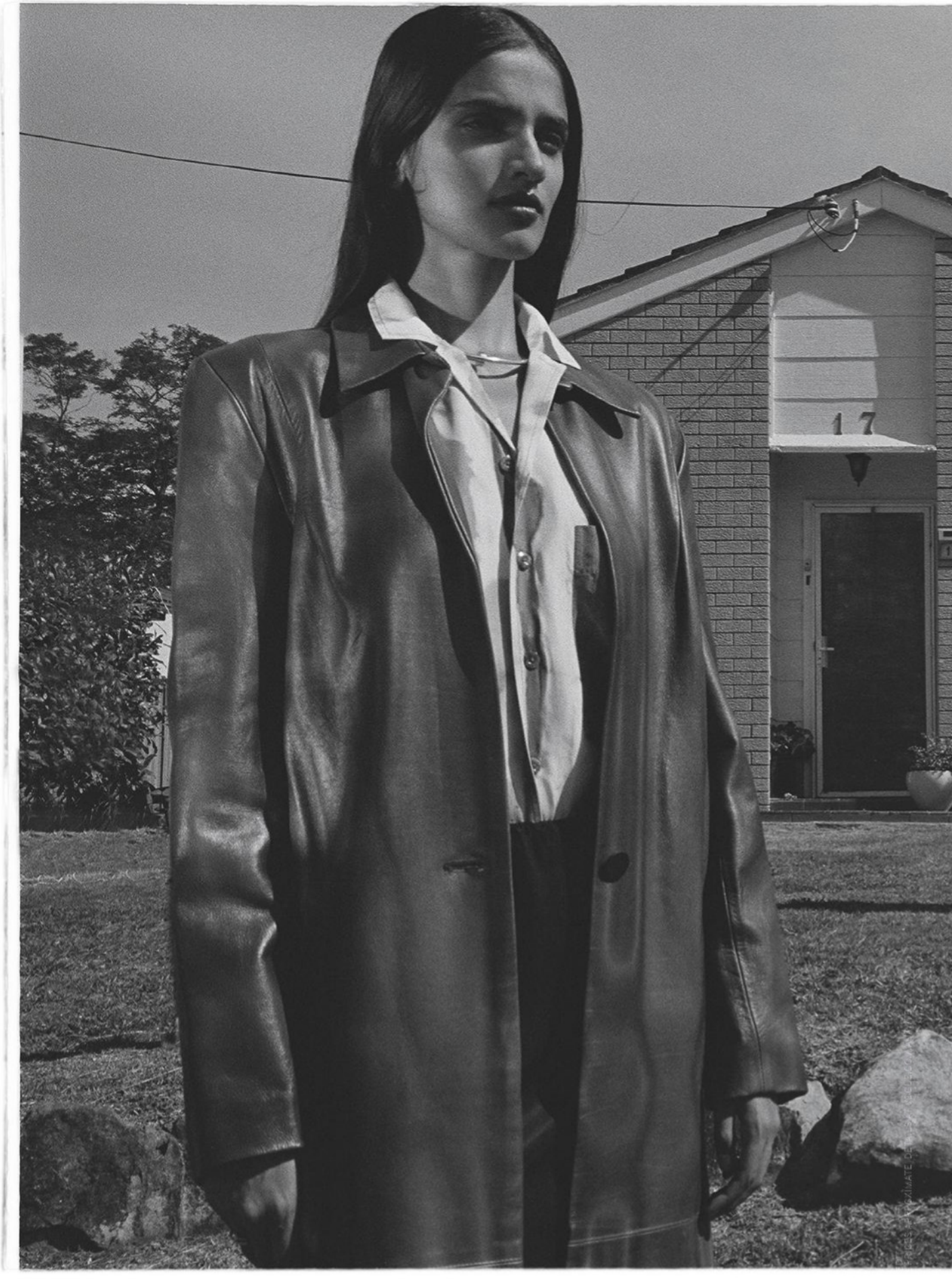
JAKE TERREY

This page: HERMÈS dress, $25,615, and scarf, $940. **Opposite page**: SAINT LAURENT dress, $14,505, and briefs, $695.

HELENSBURGH MEMORIAL POOL

JAKE TERREY

Opposite page, left: MIU MIU top, $1,490, top, worn underneath, $1,140, belt skirt, $1,670, skirt, $4,350, and loafers $1,460. FALKE socks, $20. **Right**: MIU MIU blazer, $7,500, and top, $1,490, top, worn underneath, $1,140, skirt, $1,670, and shoes, $1,770. FALKE socks, $20. **This page, top**: GUCCI dress and boots, both P.O.A. POPPY LISSIMAN sunglasses, $170. BULGARI bracelet, $48,700, and ring, $12,750. **Above, left**: FENDI top, $1,980, and skirt, $2,490. TIFFANY & CO. bracelet, $21,200, and ring, $3,350. VERSACE boots, $2,580. **Middle**: FENDI dress, $7,200, bag, $4,800, and shoes, $1,490. TIFFANY & CO. ring, $11,500. **Right**: FENDI jumper, $4,150, skirt, $2,150, and boots, $2,490. BULGARI bracelet, $48,700, and rings, on right hand, $12,750, and $13,700, and on left hand, $3,430.



Left: CHRISTOPHER ESBER coat, $5,245. SONG FOR THE MUTE shirt, $995. MATIN skirt, $690. CARTIER necklace, $18,900.

JAKE TERRELL

Right: PRADA top, $3,050, skirt, $3,150, bag, $6,100, and shoes, $1,940. CARTIER bracelet, $5,100, and ring, $1,870.

This page, left: CHANEL jacket, $11,170, skirt, $5,870, necklace, $2,590, and cuffs, $2,690 each. **Right**: CHANEL dress, $15,970, and earrings, $2,040, all from the Chanel boutiques. **Opposite page**: VALENTINO dress, P.O.A.

JAKE TERREY

JAKE TERREY

CHRISTIAN DIOR top and skirt, both P.O.A. CARTIER necklace, $18,900.

This page: VICTORIA BECKHAM dress, P.O.A. GUCCI sunglasses, $970. JIMMY CHOO bag, $2,395. **Opposite page, left**: VERSACE dress, P.O.A. GEORG JENSEN earrings, $735, necklace, $3,925, and ring, $385. AJE shoes, $325. **Right**: VERSACE dress, P.O.A. TIFFANY & CO. necklaces, $4,550 (top), and $5,900. Hair: Daren Borthwick. Make-up: Peter Beard. Models: Lottie Aaron, Abény Nhial, Anjali Torvi.

JAKE TERREY

Return feeling

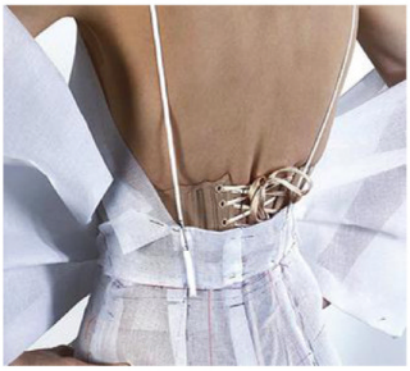
Haider Ackermann's masterful handling of cloth and cut sees him back on the runway, reviving a deeply personal and intuitive love of fashion in the process. Alice Cavanagh finds a new creative freedom propelling him.

Haider Ackermann is jubilant, and it's infectious. Just home from work and dressed in a fresh white T-shirt, his Hollywood-handsome face framed by a boyish new haircut, he is grinning from ear to ear. It's late January and less than a week has passed since the triumphant reveal of his first-ever haute couture collection at Paris Fashion Week, a one-off for the house of Jean Paul Gaultier, and Ackermann's second only runway collection in nearly three years. If you have been following the couture beat, Gaultier stepped down from the brand in 2020 and has entrusted a new designer each season to create a collection. Colombian-born, Paris-based Ackermann, is the fourth and he has cleaned up in the reviews, with *The New York Times* calling it, "The best show in Paris." →

This page: the designer's spring/summer '23 couture collection for Jean Paul Gaultier. **Opposite page**: Haider Ackermann.

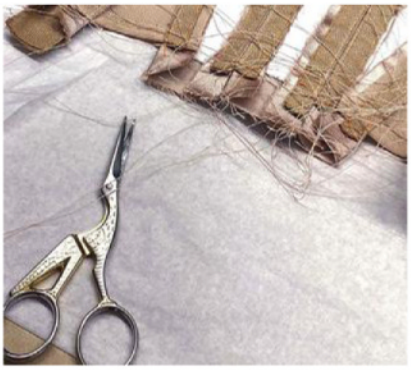
PORTRAIT: THOMAS CRISTIANI. COURTESY JEAN PAUL GAULTIER

Above: Ackermann and Tilda Swinton at the Venice International Film Festival, 2022. **Below**: Ackermann's designs for Jean Paul Gaultier haute couture spring/summer '23.



Above: A couture piece in progress. **Below**: With Timothée Chalamet in Venice for the International Film Festival in 2021.

Above: Ackermann preparing a model for the Jean Paul Gaultier haute couture collection at Paris Fashion Week. **Below**: Some of the intricate construction involved in his creations.



"There was always this explosion of fabrics and colours. I didn't know

"Today is the first time I feel at ease and can embrace all that has happened in the past few days. It has been overwhelming, I didn't expect it," the 51-year-old says – that grin lighting up again. "I mean, I know that the team and I did all this work, but the triumph that followed still feels far away from me."

The show, which was set to the haunting protest song "Baraye" by Iranian singer, Shervin Hajipour, written following the death of Mahsa Amini, was intended to envelope the audience in a moment of calm and quiet – so all could be present to the moment, and the work. "There are ladies who have spent days pleating a dress, putting 11,000 pins in one garment," he says of the artistic prowess on display, adding, "I now have a complete love affair with all those women and men who listened to whatever I had to say and tried to translate it. We can have all these wild fantasies, but they do the real work."

Ackermann isn't an obvious fit with Gaultier's theatrical, oft-irreverent repertoire, but when he did find a common language – in their shared appreciation for subversion and pure tailoring – he created breathtaking magic. A tight edit of looks was drawn in pure lines and sculptured silhouettes, and what stood out was a near-erotic tension between the masculine and feminine. "I really understood the immaculate tailoring Gaultier did in the past. It was always a suit for women, but twisted somehow – something I flirt with, too," says Ackermann.

Seated front row were the designer's closest friends and consummate muses, the actors Tilda Swinton and Timotheé Chalamet, who at every red-carpet moment seem to embody the seductive fluidity Ackermann has fine-tuned since he launched his eponymous label in 2004. On occasion, Swinton is equally as statuesque in his tailored, fishtail sequin dresses as she is lissom in a relaxed pants-suit, and in the six years since they started working together, Chalamet has blossomed into a style icon, climaxing with that backless crimson halter neck top at the 2022 Venice Film Festival.

"Timothée embraces his feminine side – but that doesn't make him at all feminine," says Ackermann, whose personal closeness with and innate understanding of the two actors visibly seems to empower their choices. "There's a fine line and if you can find this balance, it's very sensual. I have always borrowed clothes from my partners, and that is about pure emotion. There is the smell of them, it's nothing calculated about gender fluidity – it's exchanging with your loved one."

Born Haider (which means lion in Arabic) in Bogotá, Colombia, Ackermann was adopted by a French couple as a baby. He never lived in France as his father's career as a cartographer took the family to live in far-flung places like Ethiopia, Chad and Algeria. As a young child living in Arab cultures, he was privy to intimate female gatherings – the moment when women remove their veils – and the swathes

IMAGES: COURTESY JEAN PAUL GAULTIER, GETTY IMAGES, INSTAGRAM: @H.A

All looks from Haider Ackermann's spring/summer '23 couture collection for Jean Paul Gaultier.

that fashion was a career, but I knew I had to play with fabric"

and layers of garments they wore made a lasting impression. "There was always this explosion of fabrics and colours. I didn't know that fashion was a career, but I knew I had to play with fabric," he says of a formative memory, which might explain the suggestive nature of his designs and his talent as a colourist in which he employs a vivid hue – like the jewel-toned satin lining on a crepe suit – in the most seductive fashion.

Over 18 years, Ackermann built a robust and much-admired small fashion business, first with a focus on womenswear, and then menswear from 2010. His name was often floated for potential appointment at both Dior and Martin Margiela, and the late Karl Lagerfeld once publicly named him as a worthy successor at Chanel. And yet, he has stayed his own path, briefly taking on the artistic director role at Berluti in 2016 for just three seasons. "There were houses that were so beautiful, but I felt I had nothing to say there, and I wanted to be faithful and truthful to what I felt," he says of the opportunities that came his way.

Perhaps unexpectedly, as someone so well established, this period now has been his most fertile. In addition to the Jean Paul Gautier outing, last November, Ackermann revealed a one-off collaboration with the Italian sportswear brand Fila, which will be arriving soon in store. The project allowed him his first foray into sportswear and saw him skilfully embracing tech fabrics and a playful, technicolour palette. All of which was only possible because he broke free of a contract with former long-term business partner, Anne Chapelle, with whom he has been in a lengthy legal battle since 2020, the same year he last showed on the runway. He claims he was not free to do collaborations in that arrangement. "Berluti was a difficult matter with her – so to touch sportswear, which I have never done before, and to learn those techniques, to have a dialogue with haute couture – all of those things would not have been possible," he says.

During this difficult period, his eponymous line has been on hiatus, but concurrently, his profile and spirits were buoyed by Swinton and Chalamet who continued to seek out his collaboration at every possible moment. "Tilda is my closest friend, she knew what was going on and she said you are going to make a dress for me, and we are going to be everywhere because I want you to shine," he says, adding that his lawyers were able to green light these bespoke looks because they had no direct commercial value.

Now, he has his name back, Ackermann has also gained a certain freedom away from the seasonal cycle, which has allowed him time to meditate on his next move. "I questioned everything; will people still desire me, am I still relevant in this business?" he says candidly of the challenging period. If his recent output is anything to go by, then Ackermann is only getting started. "I want to do what makes my heart beat faster and I have so much more to say," he says. "The best is yet to come; no one can convince me otherwise." ■

New horizons

Seoul is tomorrowland, teeming with models, actors, activists and musicians who are breaking moulds and leaning into what's now and what's next. Monica Kim takes stock of a brave new world. Styled by Kate Phelan. Photographed by Cho Gi-Seok.

SKY'S THE LIMIT
At Changgyeong Palace – erected by the exalted King Sejong in the mid-15th century – model Yoon Young Bae looks out over northern Seoul in a densely ruffled jacket and skirt.

SIMONE ROCHA jacket, $3,390, bodysuit, $760, skirt, $2,675, belt, worn as veil, P.O.A., earrings, $885, bag, $1,600, and shoes, $1,600. All prices approximate; details at Vogue.com.au/WTB.

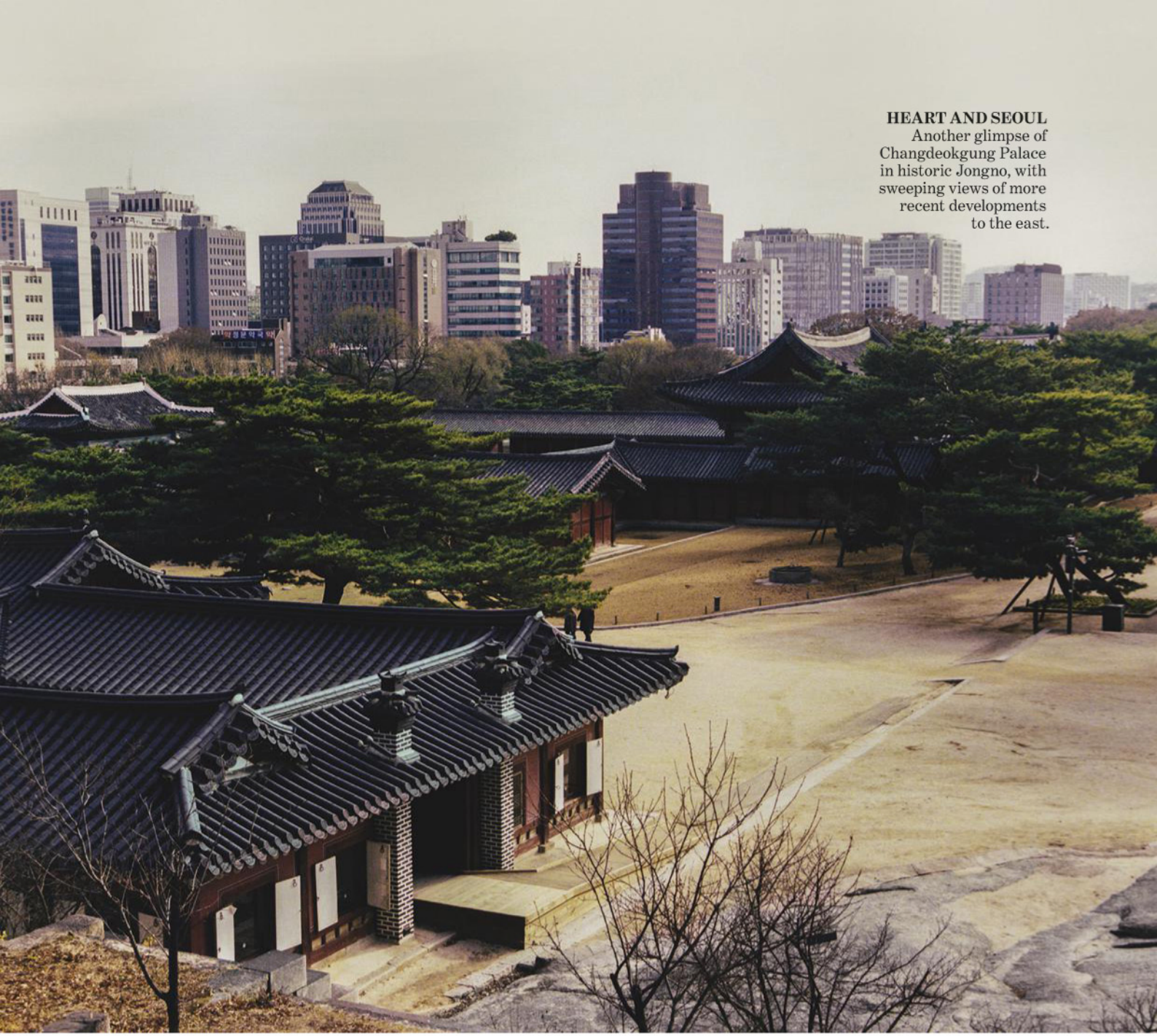
NEXT STOP
Stepping lightly through Yeoksam Station in dynamic Gangnam, model Chloe Oh cuts a sharp figure.

PRADA coat, $5,700, jumpsuit, $2,750, and shoes, $1,940.

CHO GI-SEOK

EVERYTHING'S COMING UP ROSES
Framed by the splendid interiors of the Korea Furniture Museum, Bae pumps up the volume in a sculptural dress.

RICHARD QUINN
dress, P.O.A. Tights, stylist's own.



HEART AND SEOUL
Another glimpse of Changdeokgung Palace in historic Jongno, with sweeping views of more recent developments to the east.

What is it about Seoul that has the world in its thrall? I have fielded this question so often of late, tossed it back and forth, particularly with Koreans, as puzzled as I am by the sudden fervour.

The Seoul of the 1990s that I knew as a child – as an American girl growing up in the Midwest, my mother taking me twice a year to the country of her birth – was rooted in smallness.

Seoul was the pack of yoghurt drink left swinging on my grandmother's front door, the windowless market where we'd buy sticky rice cakes, the underground hall where fake Chanel wallets tumbled from black garbage bags like stone fruit from trees. It felt like a stunted city yearning for sophistication. My classmates could not place it on a map. "Is it like Beijing? Tokyo?" they would ask. "North or South Korea?"

As I entered my teens, I began to dread the prospect of flying 14 hours for dull department store lunches and walks along an ever-grey river. I craved the worldliness of New York, or Paris, or Tokyo, and wanted to own a real Chanel wallet instead of a convincing fake. Immature, I thought that Seoul lacked *savoir vivre*, and said so to my mother, who acquiesced and we ceased our yearly visits. The city faded from my view.

When I returned in the 2010s, I didn't recognise what I saw. Young men and women roved along picturesque avenues, sharply dressed in Vetements, eyes fixed on smartphones. I revisited old haunts, relishing the visual feast – and when I started working as an editor for US *Vogue*, I covered Seoul's emerging designers and cultural figures. I noticed my fellow editors following Korean fashion labels, my friends streaming my mother's favourite Korean soap operas. One winter, a blonde woman in yoga pants tapped my shoulder in the checkout line at a posh butcher's, pointing at the jar of kimchi in my hand. "You know that's spicy, right?" Seoul had officially become cool. →

CHO GI-SEOK

MODERN LOVE
Cho Gi-Seok pays homage to his own photograph in *Dazed* Korea last year.

Soo Yeon (left) wears a BOSS jacket and pants, both P.O.A. Hyung Joon wears a DOLCE & GABBANA trench coat and jumpsuit, both P.O.A.

WINDOW DRESSING
An almost celestial vision in her many-pleated dress, model Britney Kim conjures the Winged Victory of Samothrace in one of the Korea Furniture Museum's light-flooded rooms.

JUNYA WATANABE dress, $1,830. PRADA shoes, $1,940. Tights, stylist's own.

©HO GI-SEOK

BRIGHT LIGHTS, BIG CITY
Producer Code Kunst is on the vanguard of Seoul's music scene. Here, he surveys the thronging Jonggak Station intersection.

GUCCI jacket, P.O.A.

BREAKING COVER
At Changgyeong Palace, Bae peeks out from the romantic abundance of a white veil.

SIMONE ROCHA jacket, $3,390, and belt, worn as veil, P.O.A.

FRINGE BENEFITS
Even as the traditional Korean houses, or *hanoks*, that contain the Korea Furniture Museum's vast collection let viewers imagine how pieces existed in situ, Oh's graphically printed, stunningly textured dress feels rooted purely in the here and now.

BOTTEGA VENETA
stole, $20,250, dress, $46,400, and earrings, $1,480.

CHO GI-SEOK

CHOI SEOK

GOING SIDEWAYS
As striking in colour as it is in silhouette, Bae's dress can't help but make an already sumptuous setting even more special.
ALEXANDER McQUEEN
dress, P.O.A.

The stunning flash of photographs that spill across these pages speaks to *Vogue*'s fascination with the pace of Seoul's transformation; in fashion, beauty, music, film, art and technology. I can attest to all of it. Three years ago, I moved to Seoul full-time for work, and though I was accustomed to Manhattan's long hours, the city quickly consumed me. My colleagues feverishly clocked 20-hour shifts, accomplishing impossible tasks five times a day, and there was barely time to sleep. Seoul was an engine running at unfathomable speed, exhausting and exhilarating. Yet that momentum has given birth to a new school of iconoclasm: artists and actors, models and singers, who were shaped and driven by the pressure, but have also broken with it – finding ways to stand out, express who they are, and cut against the sheen of glossy perfectionism that has defined Korean pop culture in the past.

The personalities in these images represent a new stage of evolution. Take Balming Tiger: an alternative and fully independent K-pop collective that is set apart by its diverse roster of 11 multifaceted young artists; or Jungle, an activist who last summer launched Transparent, a party series to celebrate and uplift transgender people. Beloved actress Doona Bae, who has staunchly pursued her craft for more than two decades, has become a role model for young actors who eschew the overt trappings of superstardom; so has producer Code Kunst, whose lack of pretension and quiet passion for composition have made him an unlikely heart-throb.

Even NewJeans, the chart-burning idol girl group that debuted last summer, are singular in that they emerge from a label with a female CEO, Min Hee Jin, a rarity in the industry. With NewJeans, there are no corsets or ball gowns, no overbleached extensions or stiletto nails. Just five high school-aged girls playing themselves, with black, hip-length hair, singing and dancing to 90s-style teen pop with exuberant smiles. As NewJeans's Hanni tells me, the label's goal was authenticity. "Because at the end of the day, we're the ones standing on stage."

"It's such an honour to be able to express ourselves," adds her co-idol Danielle. Small steps towards progress can feel the most profound. ■

SURROUND SOUND
Model and singer Soo Joo Park – who releases dream pop under the name Ether – faces the music in a gleaming bodysuit and leggings.

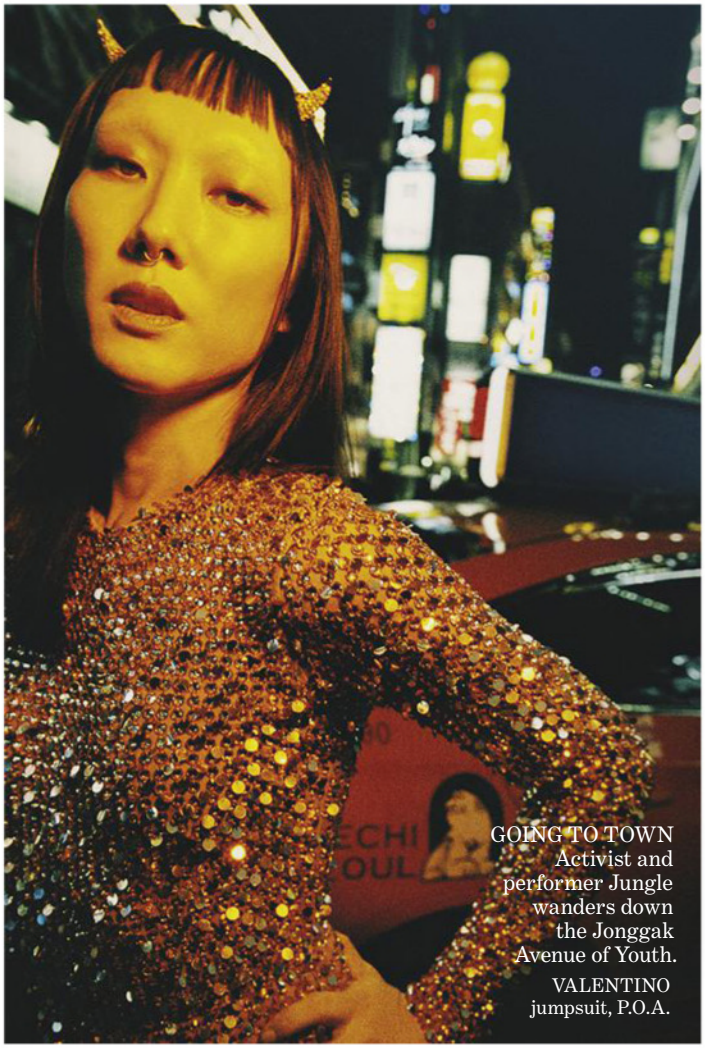
ALAÏA bodysuit and leggings, both P.O.A.

TALL ORDER
K-pop collective Balming Tiger.

From top: Omega Sapien wears a PRADA jacket; Mudd the student wears a LOUIS VUITTON coat; Chanhee Hong wears a PRADA jacket; Leesuho wears a LOUIS VUITTON shirt; bj wnjn wears a PALACE SKATEBOARDS jacket. All P.O.A.

JOY DIVISION
Model Gyo makes a wonderful scene.

RICK OWENS dress, P.O.A.



GOING TO TOWN
Activist and performer Jungle wanders down the Jonggak Avenue of Youth.

VALENTINO jumpsuit, P.O.A.

FRAMING DEVICE
Known for her work with directors such as Bong Joon-ho, Park Chan-wook and Hirokazu Koreeda – including his 2022 film *Broker* – actor Doona Bae goes elegantly incognito.

REJINA PYO coat and jacket, both P.O.A. Turtleneck, stylist's own.

CHO GI-SEOK

HYPE GIRLS
The rising idol group NewJeans is setting the pace in K-pop.

From left: Hyein wears a LOUIS VUITTON dress, P.O.A., and shoes, $3,500; Hanni wears a MÜNN bodysuit, P.O.A.; Haerin wears a JUNYA WATANABE jacket, P.O.A.; Danielle wears a MICHAEL KORS COLLECTION dress, P.O.A.; Minji wears a CHANEL jacket, $28,690, and belt $2,330, from the Chanel boutiques. Turtlenecks and shoes, stylist's own.

CHO GI-SEOK

MOVING RIGHT ALONG
However you get from here to there, make like Bae and consider a little white dress and matching cardigan for your next day out.

FENDI cardigan, $4,150, and dress, P.O.A.

GAME STOP
Park entering a PC Room in trendy Seongsu-dong.

CHANEL cape, $4,480, and T-shirt, $3,020, from the Chanel boutiques.

EYE OF THE TIGER
Oh blooms in a garden-fresh dress.
LOEWE dress, P.O.A.

CHO GI-SEOK

EVERYTHING IS EVERYTHING
The visual vim of Oh's dress – all bold tones and artfully clashing prints – calls to mind nothing so much as the heady mood of 21st-century Seoul itself.

LOUIS VUITTON dress and tights, both P.O.A.

SOMEWHERE OUT THERE
From Changgyeong Palace, the iconic Namsan Tower – a communication and observation tower built in 1969, and standing nearly 243 metres tall – is visible in the distance.

Hair: Gabe Sin
Make-up: Seongseok

CHO GI-SEOK

She's the New Zealand trainer to the stars who has conquered the world one burpee at a time. As Kirsty Godso gears up to launch *Vogue* Body exclusively with *Vogue* Australia, she tells Amy Campbell why feeling good is at the heart of her fitness philosophy.

This page: Kirsty Godso wears a DION LEE top, $650. CAROLINE REZNIK pants, P.O.A. TIFFANY & CO. earrings, $10,200. BOTTEGA VENETA shoes, $1,340. **Opposite page**: DION LEE dress, $1,200. TIFFANY & CO. earrings, $1,850, and ring, $1,050. LOUIS VUITTON dumbbells, $3,850.

POWER TO HER

Styled by Miguel Urbina Tan. Photographed by Jamie Heath.

Kirsty Godso is squatting, effortlessly, in goddess pose. She's been holding the wide-legged stance for a few minutes now, which means her abductors must be screaming; the 10-centimetre Saint Laurent stilettos she's wearing can't be making things any easier. Did we mention she's holding a set of Louis Vuitton dumbbells? You would never know. As the camera clicks away, the Nike Master Trainer responsible for keeping supermodels, including Kaia Gerber, in picture-perfect shape exhibits runway levels of composure herself. Then she cracks a smile, and the entire studio lights up. "I never wear high heels or dresses – I'm literally always in baggy jeans," says Godso, her native New Zealand accent still thick. "But I feel really good in this!"

Feeling good is the core tenet of Godso's philosophy. It's an outlook that might not seem radical today, as fitness culture embraces a more intuitive form of wellness. But when Godso began her career in the early 2010s, exercising to feel good – not simply to beat your body into submission – was somewhat of a different approach. It's also what gave Godso her authentic edge, and it continues to be the reason people, and young women especially, gravitate towards her workouts.

Unbeknownst to Godso at the time, her philosophy was informed by her upbringing. She grew up in Auckland, and played as many sports as possible in school, because that's what kids growing up in the 90s in New Zealand did. "It was never a transactional thing, like you didn't play sport to look a certain way," she says. "Me and my friends just wanted to be fit." When she reached university, Godso discovered

JAMIE HEATH
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SPORTMAX top, $2,160, and pants, $990. TIFFANY & CO. earrings, $2,350, and necklace, $4,550. GIUSEPPE ZANOTTI shoes, $1,395.

Hair: Rory Rice
Make-up: Nisha Van Berkel

the gym, structuring her finance and marketing classes around her favourite group fitness sessions at the local Les Mills gym. She says she had no desire to be a personal trainer, but Les Mills, a New Zealand-based global fitness sensation, was looking to launch a HIIT program and because she was always hanging around – and bringing her effervescent energy to every class she attended – the team approached her to be the face of this new workout.

"I was like, 'no way'. It wasn't very cool to be a personal trainer back then. The language gym instructors used was quite crass and aggressive," says Godso. "But I was always really into marketing, and I was excited about being someone who could maybe change the way people experienced fitness. I just thought there could be a cooler way to talk about training."

There was. A year after leading Les Mills's "Grit" program, she caught the attention of Nike, who named her an official trainer in 2013. ("I think they saw me doing this fitness DVD, and they were like, 'Who is this girl all the way from New Zealand teaching these crazy workouts?'") Godso moved to New York and began designing and filming workouts for the sportswear giant – her hot-sauce burpees, a particularly intense double knee-tuck riff on the manoeuvre, earning her a reputation as a trainer who's unafraid to spice things up.

She wasn't just working hard – she was working out even harder. Eventually, her body buckled. The week of her 30th birthday, she was diagnosed with shingles, a viral infection that can be triggered by extreme stress. A comprehensive blood test revealed her hormones were also completely out of balance; she hadn't had a period in seven years, and due to the extreme amount of exercise she was doing, her body fat levels were hovering around seven per cent. During recovery, the only workouts Godso's body could handle were yoga and pilates, which at first she found "hard". "But then I got into a rhythm with it … and I felt amazing," she recalls. "That was the first time where I was like, 'Why is no one really talking about how we're trying to live?' Rather than being like, 'What do I really need today?' We just tell our bodies, 'You're gonna do this.' I did that for so long, and I really wrecked myself."

Although it was a challenging lesson, Godso is grateful for the insight the experience gave her. Today, the notion of working with your body, respecting your mental health and understanding how exercise might impact your hormones factors into her teachings. "You just don't need to live in sixth gear all the time," she explains. "And while I'm big on plans and programs, it's also important to be able to adapt to what your body needs within that plan. I'm always telling the girls, 'It's fine to just go for a long walk.' I take them all the time," she says. "And the crazy thing is, you'll notice that women will start to feel amazing in their bodies the moment they slow it down. I have to teach people that your body is not just a machine."

When Godso refers to "the girls", she's talking about her squad of A-list clients. In addition to Gerber, whose medicine-ball slams regularly feature on Godso's Instagram, she also trains young celebrities, including Olivia Rodrigo and Lily-Rose Depp. She says she loves working with young women especially, and a lot of her clients are between 19 and 25 years old.

"It's such a sweet spot, to meet them where they've probably already encountered some sort of insecurities with their body, and really working with them not to fall off the tracks where I personally did," she says. "And these girls want to work hard. They want to be strong and fit. So often, people will say to me, 'How does Kaia look like that? Does she just not eat?' And I hate that mentality. I'm like, 'Kaia can hip thrust 175 pounds [80 kilograms] and do 10 chin-ups. Like, that girl works hard."

Godso has plenty of exciting things on the horizon. Soon, she'll be bringing out her very own online fitness platform, where advice, programs and workouts from her network of fitness industry pals will live. She'll also be launching *Vogue* Body, a series of 30-minute workouts spanning cardio, bodyweight-style strength and athletic-inspired pilates, available online for all *Vogue* Australia readers. The sessions can be done anywhere and some of her "favourite gals" will also make special appearances.

"What I always try to bring to my workouts, and what I'm excited to bring to *Vogue* Body, is changing this way we talk about fitness to ourselves, because as soon as we make it less of a pressure 'thing', it becomes so much more accessible in our daily life," Godso explains. "I'm keen to take away some of the stigmas that exist around women and strength training, and really articulate the importance of movement, and how we can tap into what's happening in our bodies."

Vogue *Body is coming soon to vogue.com.au.*

Future classic

After six decades as Australia's leading cultural institution, The Australia Ballet is entering a new era. To celebrate, David Hallberg selects seven principal dancers who embody the spirit of progress, creativity and artistic excellence. By Saskia Tillers and Gladys Lai.

Lisa Pavane, 1980s

Lisa Pavane was 28 weeks old when her mother declared she'd become a dancer. "She named me Pavane, after the dance." Pavane became a principal artist in 1986, and in 1991 returned to the stage just six weeks after giving birth, paving a path of her own. "Motherhood gave me a different perspective on romance, death and tragedy," shares Pavane, now director of the Australian Ballet School, "so I love that we're seeing women now dancing much later into their lives than they used to." *Gladys Lai*

Lisa wears a CHRISTOPHER ESBER top, $595. CAMILLA AND MARC skirt, $500. VAN CLEEF & ARPELS rings, $33,900, and $16,200. GUCCI shoes, $1,525. Headbands worn throughout, stylist's own.

Styled by Miguel Urbina Tan. Photographed by Daphne Nguyen.

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(Right) Sharni Spencer 2020s

Being accepted into the Australian Ballet was a surreal moment for Sharni Spencer. "You pinch yourself and think they're going to call and say, 'Oh, actually, we made a mistake,'" she laughs. Even today, after 15 years with the company – named principal artist in 2022 – the reality of "having a job which is also my passion", hasn't lost its shine. As for the future of ballet, Spencer believes it will continue to be woven deeper into our cultural fabric. "People are always craving the beauty and escapism that ballet can bring." *Saskia Tillers*

Left: Ako Kondo wears a CHANEL bodysuit, $4,170, and shoes, $1,710, from the Chanel boutiques. VAN CLEEF & ARPELS earrings, $29,300. Tights worn throughout, stylist's own. **Right**: Sharni wears a CHANEL dress, $13,275, and shoes, $1,710, from the Chanel boutiques. VAN CLEEF & ARPELS earrings, $407,000.

From left: Kirsty Martin wears a SAINT LAURENT dress, $6,780, tights, $305, and shoes, $1,885. VAN CLEEF & ARPELS bracelet, $83,000; Lisa Pavane wears a SCHIAPARELLI corset, pants and shoes, all P.O.A., and belt, $5,200. VAN CLEEF & ARPELS rings, $33,900, and $16,200. Gloves, stylist's own; Justine Summers wears an HERMÈS dress, $15,765. VAN CLEEF & ARPELS earrings, $29,300. CHRISTIAN DIOR shoes, P.O.A.

ALL FOR ONE

There is excitement and electricity crackling in the air as the seven dancers arrive at the photo studio in Sydney's Alexandria. This shoot, which celebrates the recent landmark of 60 years since the formation of The Australian Ballet, feels like an immensely joyful reunion of sorts – with each new arrival welcomed in a warm embrace by her fellow company members of past and present.

Between mouthfuls of avocado toast, the dancers chat and laugh, complimenting each other effusively as dresses are donned and make-up is applied. Marilyn Rowe, a dancer with the Australian Ballet in the 1970s, affectionately twitters around the younger dancers, referring to them as her "chickens," and Lisa Pavane, who mentored and taught current principal artist Ako Kondo, admits she can't quite believe that her former student is now preparing to be a teacher herself.

It's obvious to all of those on set that these exceptional women, representative of every generation of The Australian Ballet since its inception, are bonded together not only through their shared professional experiences, but also the deeply familial nature of the company they've dedicated their lives to. From Marilyn Jones, OBE, described by artistic director David Hallberg as "a complete legend of The Australian Ballet", and who performed as the prima ballerina in *Swan Lake* for the company's inaugural season in 1962, to Sharni Spencer, the company's newest principal artist, "a very humble, self-effacing ballerina, who strives under pressure", Hallberg selected these seven women as embodiments of each era of the company, and ultimately as dancers whose legacies will endure for decades to come.

"Every dancer stands on the shoulders of giants in a way," Hallberg tells *Vogue* Australia. "But they're also defined by where the art form is when they're dancing; so how the technique evolves, how a ballerina performs. That's very generational, and I think that's the beauty of the evolution of classical ballet in that they are great dancers of their time, and [yet] each time is very different." →

DAPHNE NGUYEN
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(Below) Ako Kondo 2010s

Ako Kondo has much to thank the Australian Ballet for. For one, it's where the principal artist met her husband, Chengwu Guo, who "became the biggest supporter in my life". As *pas de deux* partners, their chemistry and talent has seen them paired in love stories such as *Cinderella* and *Romeo and Juliet*. With the birth of their first child last year, the pair is adjusting to juggling the demands of parenting and their professions. It is "sometimes chaos", Kondo admits, but "the support from this company is beyond family level". *ST*

Ako wears a CHRISTIAN DIOR dress, $29,000, shorts, bra, and briefs, all P.O.A.

(Above) Marilyn Jones 1960s

The legendary Marilyn Jones began dancing when she was five. "I actually started because I had a short Achilles tendon, and they thought it would help stretch it out." In 1962, Jones became a founding principal of the Australian Ballet and appeared in venerated roles including *Swan Lake*, *Sleeping Beauty* and *Giselle*. Now living in rural Victoria, the 83-year-old says she's "out of the picture", though with sons Damien and Stanton enjoying dance careers of their own, ballet, in all its richness, remains very much a part of her life. *GL*

VALENTINO jumpsuit, P.O.A. VAN CLEEF & ARPELS necklace, $69,500. CHANEL shoes, $1,710, from the Chanel boutiques.

Justine Summers, 1990s

Justine Summers jokes that her first impression of ballet was comparing it to gymnastics. "I was doing *pliés* thinking, 'I want to flip around beams,'" she laughs. At 17, Summers signed with the company and toured Bangkok, Singapore and London: "I loved living in hotels with the others, and that's why we're all still so close." And though she was promoted to principal artist at just 26, Summers thought of herself as an "accidental ballerina"; her favourite roles were ones where "you could make shapes with your body". Just like a gymnast. *GL*

Justine wears a HARRIS TAPPER dress, $899. VAN CLEEF & ARPELS necklace, $555,000. CHRISTIAN DIOR shoes, P.O.A

Marilyn Rowe, 1970s

One thing about Marilyn Rowe: she is always early. She puts it down to her "painful perfectionism", which also made her a fearsome ballerina. "That's what I loved about performance," confides Rowe, "that feeling of giving." After joining the company in its first intake in 1964, talent propelled her through the ranks. Soon she was muse, dancing roles created especially for her. But it's the mischief Rowe remembers dearly: like Rudolf Nureyev gluing a lace corset to her chest for *Don Quixote* in 1973, and guffawing when it peeled away mid-*pas de deux*. "There's always a grief that dancers feel when they have to retire," says Rowe, "but I was lucky that I became director of the company after I stopped." She was the first graduate to do so. *GL*

Marilyn wears a CHRISTOPHER ESBER dress, $2,995. MESHKI bodysuit, $70. VAN CLEEF & ARPELS necklace, $555,000. CHRISTIAN DIOR shoes, P.O.A.

DAPHNE NGUYEN
ALL PRICES APPROXIMATE DETAILS AT VOGUE.COM.AU/WTB

Kirsty Martin, 2000s

When Kirsty Martin hung up her pointe shoes in 2011 after an illustrious career, she thought her love affair with ballet had reached its natural conclusion. Instead, she found herself nurturing the next generation. Today, Martin is the company's ballet mistress and répétiteur, a role she considers a privilege. "I take it very seriously, because I was on the other side," she says. For most dancers, the allure of the stage, and all that a live performance encompasses is the highlight of a career spent tirelessly rehearsing, but not Martin. "My favourite memories are in the studio," she smiles. "That's what I loved most – the relationships, and the art that you make together." *ST*

Kirsty wears a FENDI jacket, $5,700, and pants, $2,450. VAN CLEEF & ARPELS earrings, $46,000.

Hair: Pete Lennon
Make-up: Victoria Baron
Set design: Mariska Lowri

FORWARD MOTION

David Hallberg was appointed to the position of artistic director in March 2020 and, despite pandemic delays, he has already ushered in a new era of creativity, including the staging of radical Netherlands ballet *Kunstkamer* in 2022.

Hallberg's vision for the anniversary season includes both "refreshing" the classics and pushing the boundaries of traditional ballet, with iconic works such as *Giselle*, *Swan Lake* and *Don Quixote*, as well as *Identity*, a co-production with the Australian Dance Theatre led by Daniel Riley, a Wiradjuri man and choreographer, set to music by Yorta Yorta composer Deborah Cheetham. *Identity* will see former company members return to the stage and is supported by Audi, marking the beginning of a multi-year partnership between the two companies as "partners in progress".

"There has to be progress and evolution in the way we express ballet, and I think that happens naturally through generations. Technique is pushed further," explains Hallberg. But beyond that, his vision of progress for the company in 2023 and beyond, in partnership with Audi, is to drive the institution itself forward. To that end, Hallberg has implemented a body image and mental wellbeing program to support its artists off stage. "We've really honed in on the idea of a mentally strong dancer as a physically strong dancer and taking mental health very seriously." Hallberg is also adamant that the future of ballet in Australia is diverse. "We work very hard on diversity and inclusion," he shares. "I think ballet has been a predominantly white art form. We are having very robust and necessary conversations about diversity in the art form."

Progress always has to go hand in hand with legacy, something the Australian Ballet embodies intuitively. "There's a reason we're doing *Swan Lake* this year," he notes. "There's beautiful traditions to that." But progress is also about evolution. "I believe strongly the art form has to evolve," the artistic director stresses. "We run the risk of becoming antiquated if we think of heritage over where we are in today's time. It's an art form that has a beating heart. It's not a museum piece. Museums don't create the art, they display the art. We create the art, and that's a huge advantage."

Styled by Emma Kalfus. Photographed by Simon Eeles.

David Hallberg wears a PRADA jacket, $5,000, pants, $1,560, and boots, $2,290.

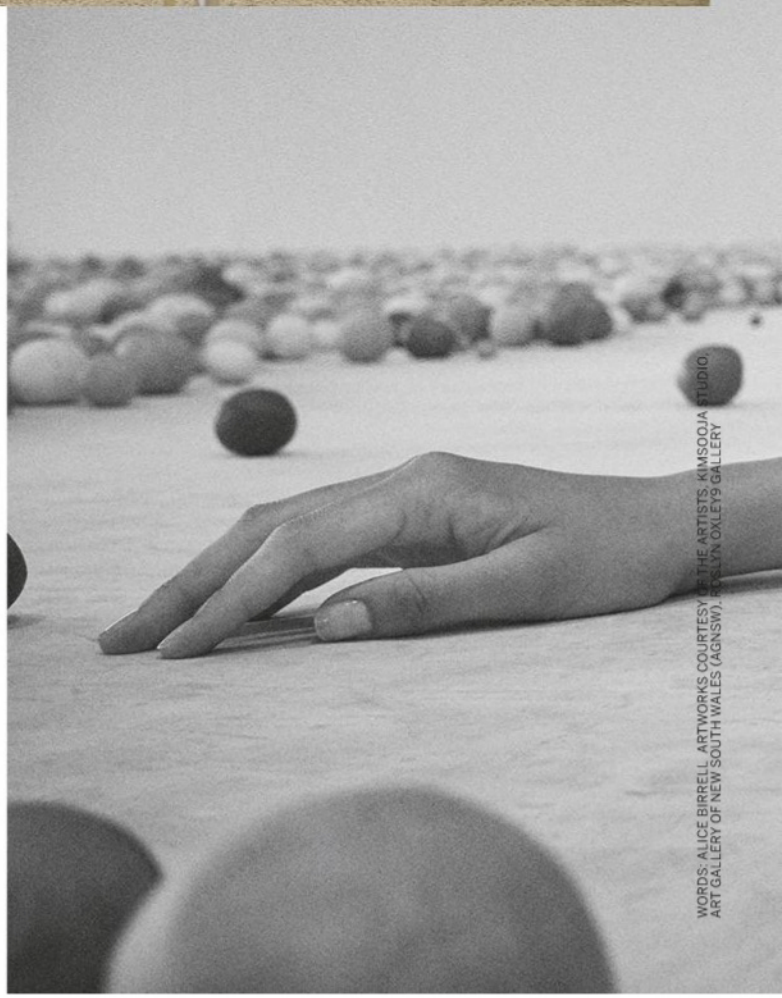
GROOMING: CHRISTINE GAUNT
ALL PRICES APPROXIMATE DETAILS AT VOGUE.COM.AU/WTB

Prada's minimalist approach was worth jumping through hoops for, starting with airy palette-cleansing shades, like this coat in palest pink, the perfect counterpoint to Tom Polo's searing brushstrokes in the new Sydney Modern Project.

PRADA coat, $7,700, jacket, $4,300, worn underneath, and shoes, $1,940.

Paintings in background:
***The most elaborate disguise* (2016, 2019) by Tom Polo**.

Installation in foreground:
***The divisions and subtractions* (2017) by Mikala Dwyer.**



Kimsooja's interactive artwork *Archive of mind* invites viewers to leave their own mark, much like Prada's classic shirting, made to be moulded by a life's worth of wear.

PRADA shirt, $2,270.

***Archive of mind* (2016) by Kimsooja.**

WORDS: ALICE BIRRELL. ARTWORKS COURTESY OF THE ARTISTS, KIMSOOJA STUDIO, ART GALLERY OF NEW SOUTH WALES (AGNSW), ROSLYN OXLEY9 GALLERY

LIVING WORKS

Prada's everyday pieces were grounded in the domestic sphere this season. Here, they step out and live large at the Art Gallery of New South Wales's new wing, Sydney Modern Project.

Styled by Kaila Matthews. Photographed by Charles Dennington.

Crafted from long pieces of sky-blue yarn, Mira Gojak's work finds common thread in Prada's blazer with trailing tie, a nod to the elegant imperfections in life.

PRADA jacket, $7,000, shirt $1,550, pants, $1,630, bag $3,600, and shoes, $1,940.

***Pausing place, uncounted* (2019) by Mira Gojak.**

The daubs of colour on Prada's shift dresses read half as watercolours in progress, half as hammered metal, not dissimilar to the play of light on Shireen Taweel's copper sculptures.

PRADA dress, $5,200, and shoes, $1,940.

Prints in background: ***Moonrising III series*** **(2006) by Bohnchang Koo**.

Installation in foreground: ***tracing transcendence*** **(2018–21) by Shireen Taweel. Sound composition: Spencer Anthony Reid.**

CHARLES DENNINGTON
ARTWORKS COURTESY OF THE ARTISTS AND AGNSW

The passage of time is both the subject of Ugo Rondinone's mirrored work and captured in the deliberate creasing of Prada's timeless ballet-pink tote bag as if to say: "Keep me by your side forever."

PRADA jacket, $4,300, shirt, $2,270, skirt, $1,670, and bag, $5,300.

***clockwork for oracles* (2010) by Ugo Rondinone**.

CHARLES DENNINGTON
ARTWORKS COURTESY OF THE ARTISTS, AGNSW AND NIGHT GALLERY, LA

Prada and Simons were unequivocal about the new silhouette: elongated skirt lengths, with not a mini in sight, a shape mirrored in Samara Golden's optical-illusion skyscraper that appears to stretch to infinity.

PRADA shirt, $3,400, top, $1,750, and skirt, $1,340.

Hair: Sophie Roberts
Make-up: Anne Timper
Model: Zinnia Kumar

***Guts* (2022) by Samara Golden.**

Shining setting

Jeweller Chaumet brings storied French flavour to every one of its pieces, including a new Sydney flagship. Here, a sparkling sampler of keepsakes to be uncovered there.

Styled by Emma Kalfus. Set styled by Roze Hooij. Photographed by Victoria Zschommler.

Chaumet signatures are to be found throughout the 160-square-metre boutique including Liens (above) and the heirloom-worthy Joséphine Valse Impériale necklace (right), both paeans to a tradition of romantic and royal style – the latter so called after an early famous client, Empress Joséphine.

This page: CHAUMET rose gold pendant necklaces set with diamonds, from top left, Jeux de Liens Harmony pendant (medium), $4,420, Liens Evidence pendant, $5,025, and Jeux de Liens Harmony pendant (large), $15,075.
Opposite page: CHAUMET white gold Joséphine Valse Impériale necklace set with diamonds, $530,735.

WORDS: ALICE BIRRELL.
ALL PRICES APPROXIMATE DETAILS AT VOGUE.COM.AU/WTB

950855
Thank you
TABLE
GUESTS
WAITER
CHECK NO.
TOTAL
Menu

Snag yourself the delicately torquing spirals of the Torsade de Chaumet, each a sculptural feat capturing distinctly French *élan* in exquisite, expertly set diamonds.

The distinct cross that marks Liens, symbolic of two lives crossing paths, make it the collection to ponder in the boutique's new bridal salon. The only decision: just one, or a fistful of the elegantly minimal rings?

Opposite page: CHAUMET Torsade de Chaumet white gold ring set with diamonds, $272,800; and Torsade de Chaumet white gold bracelet set with diamonds, $414,065. **This page**: CHAUMET Liens Evidence rings set with diamonds, from left, white gold rings, $14,985, $5,575, and $6,030, and rose gold ring, $5,665.

VICTORIA ZSCHOMMLER
ALL PRICES APPROXIMATE DETAILS AT VOGUE.COM.AU/WTB

Echoes of Chaumet's Place Vendôme Paris store can be found in the wheat motif, repeated throughout its heritage-listed Sydney location at 181 Pitt Street, seen here on the L'Épi de Blé De Chaumet brooch, the perfect finishing touch.

This page: CHAUMET yellow gold L'Épi de Blé de Chaumet brooch set with diamonds, $28,890.
Opposite page: CHAUMET white gold Joséphine Valse Impériale tiara set with diamonds, $678,835.

Manicure: Cindy Vellis. Model: Tia Naris.

VICTORIA ZSCHOMMLER
ALL PRICES APPROXIMATE DETAILS AT VOGUE.COM.AU/WTB

The jewel in Chaumet's crown is undeniably the maison's tiaras; an opportunity to conceive of your own headpiece, requiring between 500 to 1,500 hours to craft, takes the cake as the pinnacle in service.

The metallic mile

Our autumn update begins with radiant, translucent skin amplified by a shimmering palette of molten eyes and golden lips that glisten like amber.

MAKE-UP ANNE TIMPER **PHOTOGRAPHS** RAHEL WEISS

WORDS: KATRINA ISRAEL. STYLING: HARRIET CRAWFORD.
ALL PRICES APPROXIMATE. DETAILS AT VOGUE.COM.AU/WTB

Inner glow

A flawless complexion requires great skin prep. Try SkinCeuticals Hydrating B5 Moisture-Enhancing Fluid under your moisturiser and follow with a lightweight yet buildable foundation like Gucci Beauty's Fluide De Beauté Fini Naturel.

This page: SKINCEUTICALS Hydrating B5 Moisture-Enhancing Fluid, $165, from Harvey Norman. OFFICINE UNIVERSELLE Buly Pommade Virginale Face Moisturiser, $66. DR. BARBARA STURM Lip Balm, $75. GUCCI Beauty Fluide De Beauté Fini Naturel foundation in 240W, $102. GIVENCHY necklace worn as a headpiece, P.O.A., and hair accessory, $1,350. **Opposite page**: BYREDO Colour Stick in Chin of Gold 517, $54.

I eye

Accentuate the inner and outer corners of the eyes by extending the lash line with a metallic highlighter to elegantly elongate their shape.

BYREDO Colour Stick in Dravite, $54, and Liquid Lipstick Vinyl in Fantome 301, $75. GUCCI choker, $1,490.

Amuse-bouche

Let your lips do the talking with a glistening goddess-inspired pout in golden bronze.

BYREDO Colour Stick in Chin of Gold 517, $54.

RAHEL WEISS.
ALL PRICES APPROXIMATE. DETAILS AT VOGUE.COM.AU/WTB

Clockwise from top left: THE ORDINARY Retinol 0.5% in Squalane, $13; ESTÉE LAUDER Perfectionist Pro Rapid Renewal Retinol Treatment, $142; ALPHA-H Vitamin A Serum with 0.5% Retinol, $82; KIEHL'S Retinol Skin-Renewing Daily Micro-Dose Serum, $125; SKINCEUTICALS Maximum Strength Refining Night Cream with 1.0% Pure Retinol, $132; LA PRAIRIE Skin Caviar Nighttime Oil, $795; DERMALOGICA Dynamic Skin Retinol Serum, $149.

Skin cycling

As summer passes, address any sun damage by adding a new retinol formulation to your evening skincare routine. The active ingredient, a form of vitamin A that tackles fine lines and uneven skin tone, is the latest beauty trend to sweep TikTok.

ART DIRECTION ARQUETTE COOKE PHOTOGRAPH ANNA POGOSSOVA

WORDS: KATRINA ISRAEL
ALL PRICES APPROXIMATE DETAILS AT VOGUE.COM.AU/WTB

EDWARDS AND CO.
THE HOME OF
FUTURE PROOF
HAIR COLOUR
CROWN STREET, KIPPAX STREET, MECCA MANES, MELBOURNE CBD,
FITZROY, BYRON BAY, FORTITUDE VALLEY, GOLD COAST, NOOSA

A look ahead

The spring/summer ’23 runways saw no shortage of heavy-impact looks designed to draw the eye. Here, the biggest trends decoded. By Mahalia Chang.

Blank canvas

Across runways from New York to Milan, models committed to controversially thin 90s brows. Bleached eyebrows also made a return, providing vigour to the simplest of looks.

COLLAGE : IMOGEN FROST PHOTOGRAPHS: GORUNWAY.COM

Big, bold, brave

At Versace and Dior, make-up artists amped up the drama on striking eye looks with exaggerated wings, black eyeshadow climbing up towards eyebrows, graphic shapes and lashings of mascara.

The bixie

Reminiscent of 90s rom-com heroines, the bixie cut marries the versatility of the bob with the punkish edge of the pixie. Slick it back or tease it up.

COLLAGE : IMOGEN FROST PHOTOGRAPHS: GORUNWAY.COM

Nothing but lip

Glowing bare skin and minimalist eye make-up made perfect bedfellows for the striking lipstick shades seen on runways. Just be sure to skip the eyeliner and mascara.

Face forward

The skincare space is already moving fast, but it's about to be kicked into overdrive. From hyper-personalisation to a transformation of the in-clinic experience, Ana Eksouzian-Cavadas looks ahead to the next decade of innovation.

PHOTOGRAPHS CHO GI-SEOK

STYLING: KATE PHELAN HAIR: GABE SIN MAKE-UP: SEONGSEOK MODEL: HANNI FROM NEWJEANS

Gone are the days when skincare was classed as a simple cleanse and a TV ad-worthy splash of water on the face. Today, it's a non-negotiable twice-daily practice, a personal investment and a retail juggernaut that shows no signs of slowing. Our obsession with skincare is clear on paper: valued at US$136 billion in 2021, the global skincare industry is projected to pass US$205 billion by 2030.

It's even more obvious on social media. Scroll through your many feeds and you'll understand the mania. Posts tagged with #skincareroutine have reached more than 24 million (and counting) on Instagram, and on TikTok the hashtag #myskincareroutine has already hit 91 million views. The more passionate the skincare devotee, the more invested they become in innovation, and the more brands want to cater to their preferences.

Some of the most popular products on the market these days started decades ago. Long before the ever-churning trend cycle, dermatologists were quietly breaking scientific boundaries in their labs. Take Dr Sheldon Pinnell, who in the 1980s changed skincare forever with his pivotal findings on vitamin C, currently one of the beauty industry's buzziest ingredients. Pinnell not only uncovered the antioxidant powers of vitamin C, he also patented what some believe is its purest form: L-ascorbic acid. To the layperson, this may not seem huge. But given the widespread popularity of the vitamin, and the fact that this single discovery continues to push the boundaries of skincare to this day, it shouldn't be underestimated.

Today, dermatologists are innovating more rapidly than ever, while the way skincare is created and formulated is also set to change. The main difference being that skincare will

become more user-focused, less authoritarian and not as trend-driven. Instead, brands will be led by customer needs, stepping up their relationship with physicians who interact with patients on a daily basis and witness their skin issues first-hand. It's an approach already overseen by L'Oréal's assistant vice president of skincare scientific affairs, Stephen Lynch, and implemented across the company's portfolio of skincare brands.

Key to this patient-centred policy are L'Oréal scientists Maggie Su, director of skincare development, and Thierry Cotton, vice president of face care, body care, and photoprotection development. To formulate products that keep up with our ever-shifting skin concerns, they combine insights gained from real people with the wider issue of how the environment affects our skin.

External aggressors such as air pollution and UV light are proving the biggest threat to our skin, making it a top priority to treat the problems they cause and help build the skin's defences. The metal chelation system, for example, is one of Su and Lynch's significant developments. It is a process that sees a topical product applied to the skin to bind to heavy metals within it and work to draw them out. It's an important innovation: when excess metals remain in the skin and are exposed to UV, they're more likely to lead to active inflammatory pathways, DNA damage, and even cell death.

Photoprotection – methods to help reduce damage caused by UV light – is also front of mind, in addition to SPF. Applying antioxidants to the skin, for instance, neutralises potentially damaging free radicals caused by UV exposure and helps prevent long-term damage. You can already see the first steps of this advancement in SkinCeuticals C E Ferulic serum, containing a combination of powerful antioxidants, and in the iS Clinical's Super Serum Advance+, which helps reduce the visual effects of sun damage with the power of super ingredient L-ascorbic acid.

Skin tech, tools and treatments are another area of innovation driving engagement. An LED light treatment here, and a little microneedling there, has become the standard for many. But there is still so much ahead of us.

One compelling diagnostic tool coming our way will assess skin at its deepest levels today, while also providing a view of your face's future. The device takes a photo of your skin that goes beyond the naked eye, revealing the areas that are prone to redness and UV damage, as well as any emerging brown spots and the true quality of skin texture.

It's all part of a move towards hyper-personalisation: "You're going to see a development and immersion of different devices and tech that are not going to only integrate into a patient's routine outside of skincare, but also [help determine] what formulations … and procedures [are] to be used during," explains senior vice president of global marketing and product innovation at SkinCeuticals, Derrick Booker. "Personalisation would go so deep as [figuring] out how you are getting that dark circle. It could be a shadow, it could be veins – that customisation could go as deep as figuring out what the actual process is and how [they're] going to treat it, instead of just seeing it at face value."

Not only will this customisation tailor treatment to your physiology, it will also factor in ethnicity, meaning an end to a one-size-fits-all formula in the lab and clinic.

As for in-clinic visits, the next 10 years will see the traditional interaction between patient and physician change completely. For starters, your journey won't begin or end with a single treatment. Expect to receive a professionally prescribed pre-treatment regimen for weeks, or sometimes months, before your treatment, while your post-treatment skincare will also be physician-guided. It's all part of a move towards integrated skincare. "If your skin is exercised ahead of time, the results you get after your treatment is better because your skin responds better," says Becky Watkins-Navarro, vice president of global medical education and professional development at SkinCeuticals.

And for those intimidated by the dermatologist's office, retail-clinic hybrids will relieve the stress. "We wanted to help the consumer that is super into high actives and evidence-based skincare understand the value of the dermatologist as well," says Watkins-Navarro of the US-based SkinCeuticals SkinLabs, which provide a familiar retail environment with opportunities for treatments alongside product guidance. "You're asked: 'What would you like to do today? What's going on with your skin? Do you want it brighter? Do you want it smoother?' It's great skin made easy for that consumer … I think we'll see a lot [more] of that."

You could say the future of skincare appears so bright you're going to need shades. Or at the very least, a smart SPF to get you started.

Bitter, sweet

For the perfect transitional scent as summer sweeps into autumn, a sharp note can keep us on our toes. A new fleet of tart fragrances calling on stone fruit notes and spicy undertones comes to the fore, ripe for the picking. By Mahalia Chang.

1. MAISON MARGIELA REPLICA ON A DATE EDT, 100ML FOR $205, FROM MECCA. Intended to mimic a summer day in France's Provence (where else?), pink peppercorn and blackcurrants sit atop sparkling rose and patchouli notes. Sharp and sweet.

2. TOM FORD ELECTRIC CHERRY EDP, 50ML FOR $540. In another of Tom Ford's signature bold scents (with the hardware to match), sticky-sweet morello cherries and ginger zip across the senses, while jasmine and pink peppercorn work underneath. Not for the faint of heart.

3. GUERLAIN JASMIN BONHEUR EDP, 100ML FOR $560. For Guerlain's newest release, tart apricot and jasmine work in tandem to craft a fruity and earthy experience uplifted by powdery iris.

SISLEY PARIS Ecological Compound Advanced Formula, $360.

Add to cart

Sisley Paris knows a cult product. Forty-three years after first launching its best-selling Ecological Compound, the French house has given it a luxury face lift. The new advanced formula amps up its two-fold effect. While fighting environmental stressors, such as pollution, and improving the skin's immunity, Ecological Compound also works to hydrate and soften the skin, bringing balance and glow in equal measure.

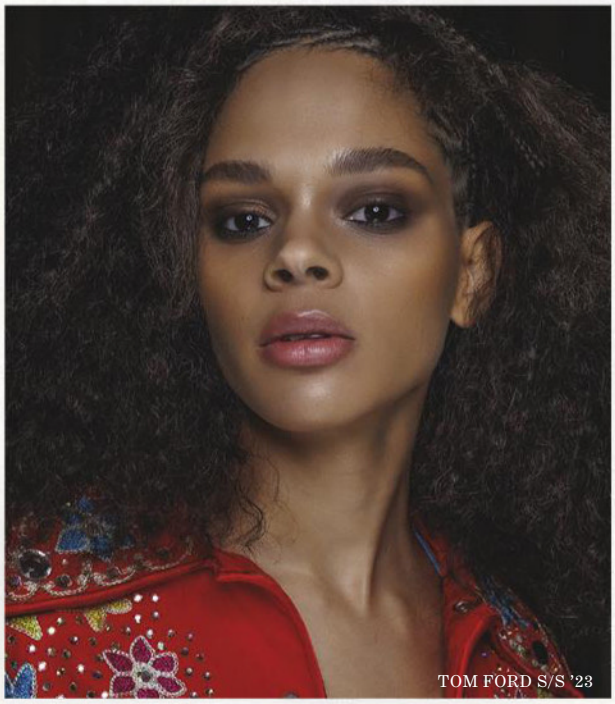
Masque on

A good hair mask will not only hydrate locks, but also protect them. Whether battling humidity, negating breakage or taming flyaways, working a mask through strands after washing will smooth, define and add shine to hair both straight and curly.

R+CO CASSETTE CURL DEFINING MASQUE, $55.
Designed for curly hair, this new release from R+Co works to bring life and bounce back to flat curls.

SAM McKNIGHT DEEPER LOVE INTENSE TREATMENT MASK, $95.

Sealing split ends and repairing damage in one fell swoop, Deeper Love unlocks better, healthier tresses for all hair types.


TOM FORD S/S '23

HERMÈS limited-edition lipsticks, $125 each.

Earn your stripes

Stripes have long been the mark of the eternally chic. Think Jane Birkin in a black-and-white striped camisole, the emblem of that French "undone" fashion aesthetic, or Audrey Hepburn in a classic Breton top. Now, a new release of Rouge Hermès's lipstick collection also embodies their charm. Poured into striped tubes (designed by Pierre Hardy, Hermès's creative director for shoes and jewellery), the three new shades join the much-loved permanent collection for a limited time only. The trio, which includes a coppery brown, an orange pink with a glimmering mother-of-pearl lustre, and a subtle pinkish beige, is a celebration of warm weather and sun-kissed skin.

Soft touch

Lean in for La Mer's latest launch. More than 10 years since it was first introduced, La Mer has updated one of its most prized products: The Moisturizing Soft Cream. In the new release, the same formula is now packed with billions of La Mer's signature multi-sized moisture spheres – now bigger in size and volume. Upon first touch on the skin, these emollient spheres burst to deliver the brand's top secret "miracle broth". Said broth helps the skin reactivate the essential lipids we lose as we age for a softer, healthier, more hydrated visage. But fear not, the new cream is still housed within the same lustrous white vessel as its predecessor, worthy of a place on even the chicest of vanities.

LA MER Moisturizing Soft Cream, $570.

(MAIN IMAGE) ART DIRECTION: ARQUETTE COOKE PHOTOGRAPH: ANNA POGOSSOVA ALL PRICES APPROXIMATE DETAILS AT VOGUE.COM.AU/WTB

Guiding spirit

This month's cover shoot was inspired by lightworker and healer Katrina Flokis, a woman who possesses a profound gift she wants to share with the world. By Jessica Montague.

PHOTOGRAPH JAMIE HEATH

Katrina Flokis wears a BIANCA SPENDER top, $745. TIFFANY & CO. necklace, $26,400.

On paper, Katrina Flokis is like many Australian women – her life is brimming with work, family and everything in between. Her Linkedin profile reveals three decades working in managerial roles across the corporate healthcare sector and she has two grown children who share her home in Sydney's leafy northern suburbs. She also recently enlisted the help of a new personal trainer. "To get some of my fitness back," Flokis shares. "I'm loving that. Reconnecting with my physical body."

That last comment hints at the unique mindset that sets Flokis apart. Because if you were to meet her out of hours, you would soon learn she is not like most. Every Monday and Tuesday evening and all day Saturday, you'll find her sitting in her front room behind a small, white-wooden desk, ready to see devoted clients. Their aim is all the same: to be healed.

Flokis is a lightworker. It's a title she's arrived at following a spiritual and religious journey spanning the past two decades of her life. "Lightworkers are awakened spiritual beings in physical form that are here to assist the collective," she explains. "My aim is to help all who connect with me to step into their own light and power." While everyone has free will and choice to live their lives in the way they desire, a lightworker's role, she continues, "is to guide the individual".

Flokis possesses a gift for delivering psychic messages, but she's also trained in healing techniques such as reiki, pranic healing and colour therapy. One-on-one sessions include an introduction to her work and methodology, guided messages from the spirit plane, a card reading and finally an energetic healing that assists in removing any blockages holding back the client.

"It's all about empowering them … what you do with this information is absolutely up to you," Flokis explains. "It's not my job to tell you what to do; it's about me telling you what I'm seeing. For me, it's always about 'What's the healing for this person? What do they need to know to help heal that part within themselves so they can step into their best self?'"

This journey began for Flokis after a life-defining moment in early adulthood. "As a child, I was always what you would call 'woke' or 'spiritually sensitive', whether it be having a strong gut feeling or intuition," Flokis explains. "[But] at the age of 20, I had a near-death experience while giving birth to my eldest child." She recalls awaking in the operating theatre and being able to detect different colours and shapes – "energy or auras around everyone" – emanating from the nurses and doctors. "At the time, I thought my eyesight was damaged," she admits. The doctors even suggested she had a migraine. "But I just knew instantly it wasn't [one]," she counters. "I went home and then things started happening that weren't happening prior. I feel like I had this gift as a child, but the process was accelerated because of what happened."

Over the next decade Flokis lent into her Greek Orthodox faith to further understand her gift, and spent time with Himalayan monks, psychic mediums and alchemists, all while juggling corporate life and raising a family. (Once during a work conference in Singapore, she squeezed in courses in reiki and pranic healing during her downtime).

Now, everyone from stay-at-home parents to high-flying corporate types and celebrities seek her expertise. "I am accessible to anyone and everyone that is open and willing to accept the light," she says.

This emphasis on illumination is at the heart of Flokis's vocation. Since tapping into her gift, the presence of unique reflections, sunbeams and streaks of brightness have been a constant as she moves through the world. From witnessing rays of magenta piercing delicate white light in a rose garden in Paris, to a photograph taken by her daughter while hiking up Diamond Head in Hawaii in which Flokis's body appears invisible – engulfed by radiance – except for her legs.

> "It's not my job to tell you what to do, it's about me telling you what I'm seeing. For me, It's always about 'What's the healing for this person? What do they need to know to help heal that part within themselves so they can step into their best self?'"

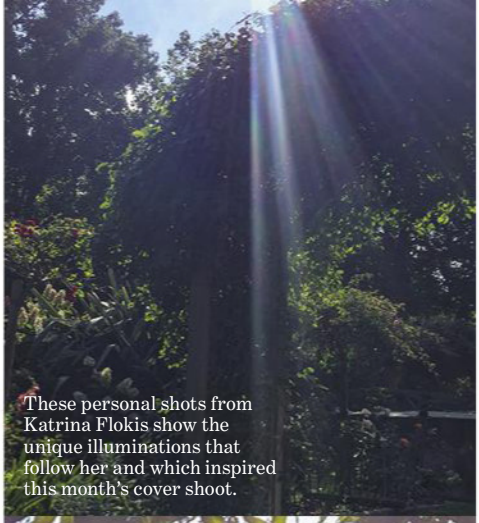
"When I see the light, to me, it represents someone from the divine coming through to protect me or send a message," Flokis shares. "It's a way of connecting with the divine, or the divine showing me signs and symbols.

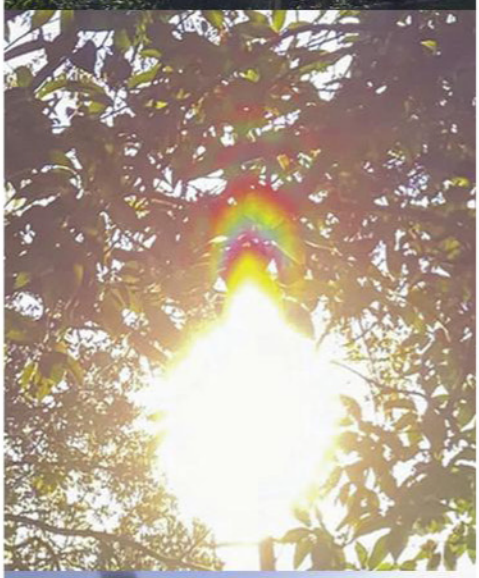
"I have had a lot of clients while they're doing a Zoom say, 'Oh my god, you've got this amazing aura around you … It's a white light projecting out of you, Kat. I can't explain it, but it's like you're beaming this white light.' So people do see it, the naked eye can see it."

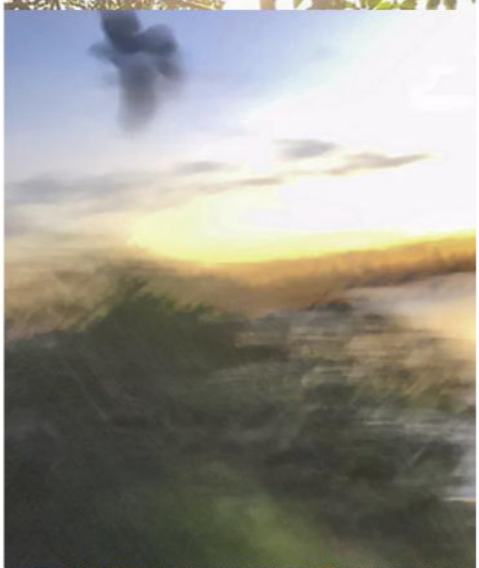
Naturally, Flokis encounters the occasional sceptic – or what she kindly calls a "curious soul" – but her response is plain. Her work for a global health technology company keeps her so busy that when she meets a new client, she is truly starting on the same page alongside them. "I don't know anything … I don't have time to google [clients] or anything like that.

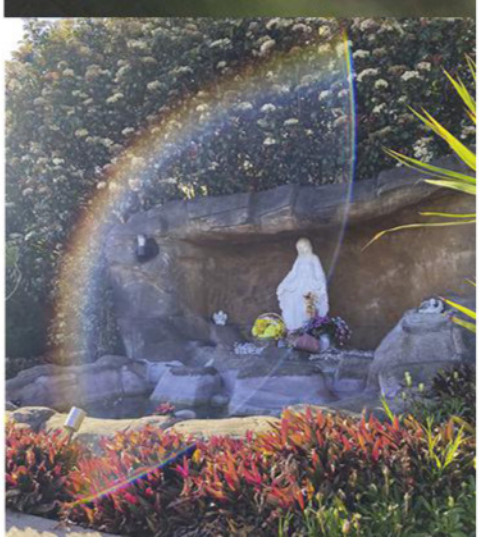
"I'm just the vessel," she continues. "This is how I see it. When you're in your ego self and you believe it's *you* doing this, I think it becomes a little bit different. But when you say, I'm just in the human form and it's this divine knowledge that's coming through me … for me, I truly believe."

Flokis is equally as clear on her purpose – to connect with as many people and share with them her gift, eventually building a complete practice around her work. "I want everyone's frequency and vibration to be so light, so it doesn't matter what you're going through in your life, it is about how you navigate through that learning and teaching to come out of it bigger and better," she sums up. "That's what I'm here to do."









These personal shots from Katrina Flokis show the unique illuminations that follow her and which inspired this month's cover shoot.

PHOTOGRAPHS: COURTESY OF KATRINA FLOKIS HAIR: RORY RICE. MAKE-UP: NISHA VAN BERKEL ALL PRICES APPROXIMATE DETAILS AT VOGUE.COM.AU/WTB

Amanda Gorman

Every month we ask insiders to curate their world. While currently working on her next book, American poet, activist and Estée Lauder global changemaker Amanda Gorman shares what is fuelling her creativity and inspiring courage and enthusiasm for the future.

On using her spotlight: "My purpose is to use my platform to pay it forward. To inspire women, girls, and all people around the world to do great things, to disrupt, to be confident, and to be future leaders. To advance literacy, equity and access, and to create meaningful impact. When I decide to do a partnership or work with an organisation or brand, I ask how can we knock down as many dominoes as possible just by flicking one. Through the Estée Lauder Companies and the Writing Change fund [a global three-year US$3 million literacy initiative], we are supporting and highlighting organisations that represent the best in their field, who are approaching literacy not just as an educational tool, but as a real instrument of social change."

On inspiring change: "What gives me courage is not just that women are changing, but *what* they are changing. They are not just transforming themselves but transforming the world. It's the biggest evolution I've seen – more women running for office, starting small businesses. To me, it's about women seeing themselves as leaders and having the belief in the change they can make. Yes, there are barriers that exist, but having the belief in change creates the possibility for change."

On beauty as activism: "As an artist, I am always looking for ways to express myself. Make-up, in addition to hair and fashion, is an instrument of agency and sovereignty for how I want to go about the world. Whether it's a foundation that actually matches my darker skin, or a bright eyeliner or lipstick, I am making political and personal statements of who I am and the history I am bringing into the space."

On skincare: "I've found that a good beauty morning starts with a good nighttime routine. I love using Estée Lauder Advanced Night Repair before bed. When I wake up, I can see the difference; my skin is hydrated and glowing. In the morning, I use a cotton pad with some witch-hazel followed by a good moisturiser like Estée Lauder DayWear Cream. I'm a fan of simple steps that give me the most payoff for the effort."

On downtime: "When it comes to decompressing, I love baking and cooking. I'm not the best at it, but there's nothing better than playing the *Ratatouille* soundtrack and making something at your stove. I'm also addicted to *The Great British Bake Off* and I just finished streaming *Game of Thrones*, which isn't incredibly light, but it was fun in its own way. [I also like] *Dickinson*, and I'm a big *Star Trek* fan."

On self-care: "I spent so long working quite hard to be a poet that I would overlook things like rest and health. As time went on, I realised that I wasn't servicing my body, brain and spirit. I love exploring new ways to restore my mind and body. I love taking baths when I can. Instead of doing a glorified version of what we think a bath is supposed to be – bubbles, a face mask – I think about how I can make this fit into who I am and what I need. I started improvising poetry couplets as I take baths, so I have a ritual that's in touch with my body but also services my mind."

On inspirational words: "Vietnamese American poet Ocean Vuong is amazing – I'm always inspired by his work and words. And I'm currently reading *The Alienist* by Caleb Carr."

Gorman speaking at President Joe Biden's inauguration in 2021.

ESTÉE LAUDER Advanced Night Repair, $118.

INTERVIEW: KATRINA ISRAEL PHOTOGRAPHS: GETTY IMAGES, DANNY WILLIAMS, INSTAGRAM: @OCEAN_VUONG ALL PRICES APPROXIMATE DETAILS AT VOGUE.COM.AU/WTB

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into ageing skin

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liquid moisturiser

Vogue Diary

Explore what's in store and worth having this month.

CRÈME DE LA CRÈME

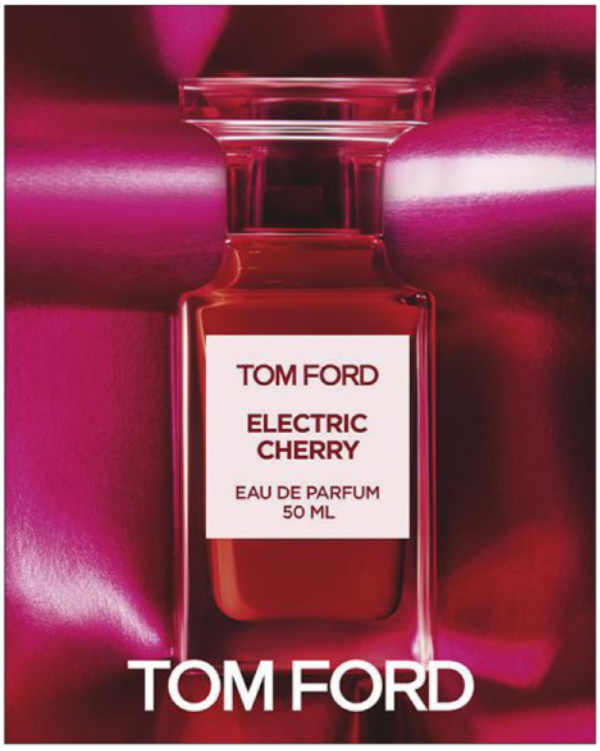
First introduced in 2012, La Mer's Moisturizing Soft Cream quickly became a cult favourite thanks to its potent results. Its newest advanced formula, launching this month, redefines the cream's texture and efficacy with a new optimised delivery and performance. Billions of multi-sized moisture spheres in every jar work to fill skin in layer by layer, transporting the brand's secret Miracle Broth™ exactly where it's needed most. **Visit cremedelamer.com.au.**

SHINE ON

For hair colour that's kind on locks, Italian brand Solfine's Crema Color achieves the seemingly impossible by leaving your hair in excellent condition post treatment. Combining gentle natural ingredients and the latest technology, the formula is enriched with Natural Complex, its base containing hydrating and protecting coconut oil. Safe to use at home with salon-quality results, it leaves your hair nourished and glossy with long-lasting coverage of grey. **Find your shade at priceline.com.au.**

PUSHING THE ENVELOPE

Wanderers Travel Co.'s San Leonardo crossbody offers a modern revamp to a classic style. With its envelope design, defined stitching and removable crossbody strap, this luxuriously soft-grain leather piece is elegant, comfortable and practical. The feature you'll wonder how you lived without? A concealed zippered pocket on the back, which allows safe and easy access to necessities, such as lip balm or passport. **Find your perfect travel companion at wandererstravelco.com.**



DYNAMIC DUO

While heated hair styling tools, such as blow dryers and straighteners, are great for creating a look, they can also lead to dry hair, breakage and split ends. This dynamic duo from Joico has been created to combat just that. Joico Heat Hero protects each strand from the thermal assault of styling tools and reduces split ends, while Joico 24-Hour Humidity Blocker is an all-in-one frizz fighter, amped-up with a dose of hold, shine and protection against humid weather. **Go to ozhairandbeauty.com.**

HEAVEN SCENT

Playful and provocative, Tom Ford's new Electric Cherry EDP is a bewitching blend of Morello cherry, ginger, warm musk and sultry jasmine. The floral-fruity scent, created for both men and women, is uplifting and invigorating, while the bright red bottle is worthy of display in any bathroom or boudoir. To cast a fragrant spell, apply one to three sprays of fragrance on skin in desired areas. **Shop the new fragrance at davidjones.com.**

Belvedere Vodka kept the cocktails flowing.

Catherine Martin (left) and Edwina McCann.

From left: Christine Centenera, Joel Edgerton, Nicole Kidman and Keith Urban.

Hamish Blake and Zoë Foster Blake.

Troye Sivan (left) and Sam Corlett.

Dion Lee (left) and Henry Holland.

Inside Icebergs Dining Room and Bar.

From left: Jessica Montague, Christopher Esber and Rebecca Caratti.

Centenera and Maurice Terzini.

Centenera and McCann.

Centenera and Justin O'Shea.

Joanna Halpin and Daniel Askill.

From left: Martin, Centenera, Edgerton and Kidman.

PHOTOGRAPHS: SONNY VANDEVELDE

In fine style

With the announcement late last year that *Vogue* Australia's fashion director, Christine Centenera, would succeed Edwina McCann as the new editor-in-chief, senior members of the *Vogue* team, designers, friends and family gathered to toast the new chapter at Bondi Icebergs. Centenera was joined by partner Joel Edgerton and a host of celebutantes, including Catherine Martin, Nicole Kidman and Keith Urban, Pip Edwards and Troye Sivan. All enjoyed martinis served by Belvedere Vodka as Centenera and McCann, who steps into a new executive role, delivered poignant speeches. Crackling with excitement, the mood in the room certainly mirrored the reaction from the fashion world at large as Centenera takes the helm.

Pisces

19 February-20 March

Your free spirit could feel tethered now with Saturn moving into your sign. Even so, you'll be taken more seriously as a New Moon and Jupiter usher in a fresh phase of self-belief that could bring you luck around money. As Pluto's shift into your emotional zone helps you wipe the past clean and rebuild, Mars moves into your romance zone to let the love-fest begin.

STYLE ICON: Tuppence Middleton

Aries

21 March-20 April

It's a powerful time for you with the Sun rebooting your energy. Friendships and ambitions could get a radical reset and you toughen up now, too, with serious Saturn ruling your emotions for the next two years. A New Moon and lucky Jupiter in your sign urge you to lean into your fears and take a leap of faith, while Venus boosts love and money in unexpected ways.

STYLE ICON: Samira Wiley

Taurus

21 April-21 May

It's all change in the cosmos and for you, too, now. Saturn refines your friendships, hopes and dreams so they're totally focused. Pluto begins an overhaul of your career and as a New Moon adds a go-for-it mindset, Mars makes you more compassionate and vocal about causes close to your heart. With Venus in your sign, you're officially this month's love magnet.

STYLE ICON: Cate Blanchett

Gemini

22 May-21 June

Your career intentions get serious this month so speak up as it's your best time to launch projects, with a New Moon and Jupiter adding extra energy and luck. Big spending could be triggered by Mars in your money zone and love is on your mind, thanks to Venus. A revolution begins now with Pluto tearing down worn-out views to give you a whole new perspective on life.

STYLE ICON: Zazie Beetz

Cancer

22 June-22 July

You've been impatient to put plans in motion and the right time is now, with Mars in your sign. A Full Moon recommends less talk, more action, and career opportunities grow under the New Moon and Jupiter's influence. With Saturn advocating independence plus commitment, relationship restrictions ease and Venus boosts friendships and life goals with love and money.

STYLE ICON: Phoebe Waller-Bridge

Leo

23 July-23 August

Reassess your values under this month's Full Moon beams. Relationships get intense thanks to Pluto, and Mercury and Saturn connect to suggest talks about making things official. Although Venus pours love into your career – including what you do and who with – you may yearn for escape and experience with Jupiter and your ruler, the Sun, prompting big-scale adventures.

STYLE ICON: Meghan Markle

Virgo

24 August-22 September

A Full Moon in your sign urges you to let others do more of the heavy lifting. Saturn suggests that they will and Mercury hints that you only need to ask. Asteroid Ceres, retrograde in your sign, plus Pluto in your health and work zone, urge you to revolutionise your priorities so your secret, sensual life is filled with the joy promised by the New Moon and Jupiter.

STYLE ICON: Ella Purnell

Libra

23 September-23 October

Your cluttered mind and emotions get swept clean with this month's Full Moon. Committing to health and work routines is Saturn's new rule, and relationships get reborn thanks to a New Moon and Pluto tearing down flaky romances or half-hearted creative aims. With Mars motivating your career, financial stability is the way forward for this new phase in your evolution.

STYLE ICON: Naomi Osaka

Scorpio

24 October-22 November

As the Full Moon closes down outworn alliances and unfinished dreams, romance and creativity get serious with Saturn influencing both areas for the next two years. Venus in your partnership zone brings love, and a New Moon plus Jupiter add energy and luck to motivate you. Your co-rulers Pluto and Mars are busy making waves, too, as it's your time to be seen and heard.

STYLE ICON: Emma Stone

Sagittarius

23 November-21 December

Discussions about putting down roots could arise now under Saturn's influence. Romance or baby news could be the incentive due to the New Moon and your ruler Jupiter, and it might take time to settle, but the effort will be worth it. As Venus boosts your health, Mars makes you super protective about family, and Pluto brings a big learning curve about communication.

STYLE ICON: Chrissy Teigen

Capricorn

22 December-20 January

Making an impact with how you connect is your ruler Saturn's new plan for you over the next two years. Big changes at home are likely, thanks to Jupiter and the New Moon, and volatile Pluto finally leaves your sign to blow old concepts about money and self-worth out of the water. Passion is your new MO with Mars motivating partnerships and Venus adding luxe to love.

STYLE ICON: Kate Moss

Aquarius

21 January-18 February

Life's been tough with Saturn in your sign, but you've learned new rules so put them into action. Rule one is not to let money slip through your fingers. Rule two is to express yourself with joy even if it feels awkward. As Saturn moves out, Venus adds love and charm to your home and lifestyle, and a new era begins with Pluto in your sign bringing a radical makeover.

STYLE ICON: Alicia Keys

ASTROLOGER: STELLA NOVA

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Gets to grips with Matthieu Blazy's reimagined Bottega Veneta via the Sardine bag, mimicking the sleek silhouette of its namesake, anchored in butter-soft *intrecciato* leather. Handle with flair.

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PHOTOGRAPH ANNA POGOSSOVA

WORDS: ALICE BIRRELL
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